

ON DIVINATION.

[Cicero composed this treatise immediately after that on the Nature of the Gods; the two subjects being indeed very closely connected. In the first book all kinds of Divination are represented as maintained by his brother Quintus, on the principles of the Stoics.]

I. IT is an old opinion, derived as far back as from the heroic times, and confirmed by the unanimous agreement of the Roman people, and indeed of all nations, that there is a species of divination in existence among men, which the Greeks call *μαντική*, that is to say, a presentiment, and foreknowledge of future events. A truly splendid and serviceable gift, if it only exists in reality; and one by which our mortal nature makes its nearest approach to the power of the Gods. Therefore, as we have done many other things better than the Greeks, so, most especially have we excelled them in giving a name to this most admirable endowment, since our nation derives the name which it gives to it, Divination, from the Gods (*Divis*), while the Greeks derived the title which they gave it, namely, *μαντική*, from madness (*μανία*). For that is Plato's interpretation of the word.

Now, as far as I know, there is no nation whatever, however polished and learned, or however barbarous and uncivilized, which does not believe it possible that future events may be indicated, and understood, and predicted by certain persons.

In the first place the Assyrians, that I may trace back the authority for this belief to the most remote ages and countries, as a natural consequence of the champaign country in which they lived, and of the vast extent of their territories, which led them to observe the heavens which lay open to their view in every direction, began to take notice also of the paths and motions of the stars; and having taken these observations for some time, they handed down to their posterity information as to what was indicated by their various positions and

revolutions. And among the Assyrians, the Chaldæans, a tribe who had this name not from any art which they professed, but from the district which they inhabited, by a very long course of observation of the stars are considered to have established a complete science, so that it became possible to predict what would happen to each individual, and with what destiny each separate person was born. The Egyptians also are believed to have acquired the knowledge of the same art by a continued practice of it extending through countless ages. But the nature of the Cilicians and Pisidians, and the Pamphylians, who border on them, nations which we ourselves have had under our government,¹ think that future events are pointed out by the flight and voices of birds as the surest of all indications. And when was there ever an instance of Greece sending any colony into Æolia, Ionia, Asia, Sicily or Italy, without consulting the Pythian or Dodonæan oracle, or that of Jupiter Hammon? or when did that nation ever undertake a war without first asking counsel of the Gods?

II. Nor is there only one kind of divination celebrated both in public and private. For, (to say nothing of the practice of other nations,) how many different kinds have been adopted by our own people. In the first place, the founder of this city, Romulus, is said not only to have founded the city in obedience to the auspices; but also to have been himself an augur of the highest reputation. After him the other kings also had recourse to soothsayers; and after the kings were driven out, no public business was ever transacted, either at home or in war, without reference to the auspices. And as there appeared to be great power and usefulness in the system of the soothsayers (*haruspices*),² in reference to the people's succeeding in their objects, and consulting the Gods, and arriving at an understanding of the meaning of prodigies and averting evil omens, they introduced the whole of their science from Etruria, to prevent the appearance

¹ Cicero had been proconsul of Cilicia, and had gained a very high reputation by the integrity and energy which he displayed in that government.

² *Aruspex* is derived from the Greek word *ἰερόν*, and *specio*, to behold, because the Aruspex prophesied from the omens which he drew from an inspection of the entrails of the victims. *Augur*, from *avis*, and *garrio*, to chatter; because the omens were drawn from the noise made by the birds in their flight.

of allowing any kind of divination to be neglected. And as men's minds were often seen to be excited in two manners, without any rules of reason or science, by their own mere uncontrolled and free motion, being sometimes under the influence of frenzy, and at others under that of dreams, our ancestors, thinking that the divination which proceeded from frenzy was contained chiefly in verses of the Sibyl, ordained that there should be ten citizens chosen as interpreters of these compositions. And in the same spirit they have also, at times, thought the frantic predictions of conjurors and prophets worth attending to; as they did in the Octavian¹ war in the case of Cornelius Culleolus. Nor indeed have men of the greatest wisdom thought it beneath them to attend to the warnings of important dreams, if at any time any such appeared to have reference to the interests of the republic. Moreover, even in our own time, Lucius Junius, who was consul, as colleague of Publius Rutilius, was ordered by a vote of the senate to erect a temple to Juno Sospita, in compliance with a dream seen by Cæcilia, the daughter of Balearicus.²

III. And, as I apprehend, our ancestors were induced to establish this custom more because they had been warned, by the events which they saw, to do so, than from any previous conclusion of reason. But some exquisite arguments of philosophers have been collected to prove why divination may well be a true science. Now of these philosophers, to go back to the most ancient ones, Xenophanes the Colophonian appears to have been the only one who admitted the existence of Gods, and yet utterly denied the efficacy of divination. But every other philosopher except Epicurus, who talks so childishly about the nature of the Gods, has sanctioned a belief in divination; though they have not all spoken in the same manner. For, though Socrates, and all his followers, and Zeno, and all those of his school, adhered to the opinion of the ancient philosophers, and the Old Academy and the

¹ This was the civil war in the consulship of Cinna and Octavius, A.U.C. 666, which ended in Octavius being put to death by the orders of Cinna and Marius.

² This was Quintus Cæcilius Metellus (the eldest son of Metellus Macedonicus), who was consul, B.C. 123, with T. Quinctius Flaminius: in which consulship he cleared the Balearic Isles of pirates, and founded several cities in the islands.

Peripatetics agreed with them; and though Pythagoras, who lived some time before these men, had added a great weight of authority to this belief—and indeed he himself wished to acquire the skill of an augur,—and though that most important authority, Democritus, had in very many passages of his writings sanctioned a belief in the foreknowledge of future events; yet Dicæarchus the Peripatetic, on the other hand, denied all other kinds of divination, and left none except those which proceed from frenzy or from dreams. And my own friend Cratippus, whom I consider equal to the most ancient among the Peripatetics, confined his belief to the same matters, and denied the correctness of any other kind of divination.

But as the Stoics defended nearly every kind, because Zeno in his Commentaries had scattered some seeds of such a belief, and Cleanthes had amplified and extended his predecessor's observations; Chrysippus succeeded them, a man of the most acute and vivid genius; who discussed the whole belief in, and question about divination in two books on that subject, and a third on oracles, and a fourth on dreams. And he was followed by Diogenes the Babylonian, a pupil of his own, who published one treatise on the same subject; by Antipater, who wrote two books, and our friend Posidonius, who wrote five. But Panætius, the tutor of Posidonius and pupil of Antipater, has degenerated in some degree from the Stoics, or at least from the most eminent men of that school; and yet he did not dare absolutely to deny that there was a power of divination, but said that he had doubts on the subject. Now if he, a Stoic, was allowed to express a doubt on a matter very much against the inclination of the rest of that school, shall we not obtain leave from the Stoics to behave in a similar manner with respect to other subjects? especially when that very question which is a matter of doubt to Panætius, is generally considered a thing as clear as day to the other philosophers of that sect. However, this praise of the Academy has been confirmed by the testimony and deliberate judgment of a most admirable philosopher.

IV. Indeed, since we are ourselves inquiring what we are to think of divination, because Carneades maintained a very long argument against the Stoics with great acuteness and variety of resource, and as we wish to be on our guard against

admitting rashly any assertion which is incorrect, or the truth of which is not sufficiently ascertained, it appears necessary for us to compare over and over again the arguments on one side with those on the other, as we have done in the three books which we have written on the Nature of the Gods. For, as in every discussion, rashness in assenting to propositions of others, and error in asserting such ourselves, is very discreditable, so above all is it in a discussion where the question for our decision is how much weight we are to attribute to auspices, and to divine ceremonies, and to religion. For there is danger lest, if we neglect these things, we may become involved in the guilt of blasphemous impiety, or if we embrace them, we may become liable to the reproach of old women's superstition.

V. Now these topics I have often discussed, and I did so lately with more than usual minuteness, when I was with my brother Quintus, in my villa at Tusculum. For when, for the purpose of taking walking exercise, we had come into the Lyceum, (for that is the name of the upper Gymnasium)—I read, said he, a little while ago your third book on the Nature of the Gods; in which, although the arguments of Cotta have not wholly changed my previous opinions, they have undoubtedly a good deal shaken them. You are very right to say so, I replied; for, indeed, Cotta himself argues rather with a view to confute the arguments of the Stoics, than to eradicate religion from men's minds. Then, said Quintus, that is what Cotta himself says, and indeed he repeats it very often; I imagine, because he does not wish to seem to depart from the ordinary opinions; but still the zeal with which he argues against the Stoics seems to carry him on to the extent of wholly denying the existence of the Gods. I do not indeed think it necessary to reply to all he says, for religion has been sufficiently defended in your second book by Lucilius; whose arguments, as you say at the end of the third book, appear to you yourself to be much nearer to the truth. But with reference to the point which has been passed over in those books, because, I presume, you considered that the inquiry into it could be carried on, and an argument held upon it with more convenience if it were taken separately, I mean Divination—which is a foreknowledge and a foretelling of those events which are usually considered

fortuitous,—I should like very much at this moment, if you please, to examine what power that science really has, and what its character is. For my own opinion is this; that if those kinds of divination which we have been in the habit of hearing of and respecting, are real, then there are Gods; and on the other hand that, if there really are Gods, then there certainly are men who are possessed of the art of divination.

VI. You are defending, I reply, the very citadel of the Stoics, O Quintus, by asserting the reciprocal dependence of these two conditions on one another; so that if there be such an art as divination, then there are Gods, and if there be such beings as Gods, then there is such an art as divination. But neither of these points is admitted as easily as you imagine. For future events may possibly be indicated by nature without the intervention of any God; and, even although there may be such beings as Gods, still it is possible that no such art as divination may be given by them to the human race.

He replied,—But to me it is quite proof enough, both that there are Gods and that they have a regard for the welfare of mankind, that I perceive that there are manifest and undeniable kinds of divination. With respect to which, I will, if you please, recount to you my own sentiments, provided at least that you have leisure and inclination to hear me, and have nothing which you would like in preference to this discussion. But I, said I, my dear Quintus, have always leisure for philosophical discussion; but at this moment, when I have actually nothing whatever which I wish to do, I shall be all the more glad to hear your sentiments on divination.

You will hear, said he, nothing new from me, nor do I entertain any ideas on the subject different from the rest of the world. For the opinion which I follow is not only the most ancient, but that which has been sanctioned by the unanimous consent of all nations and countries. For there are two methods of divining; one dependent on art, the other on nature. But what nation is there, or what state, which is not influenced by the omens derived from the entrails of victims, or by the predictions of those who interpret prodigies, or strange lights, or of augurs, or astrologers, or by those who expound lots (for these are about what come under the head of art); or, again, by the prophecies derived from

dreams, or soothsayers (for these two are considered natural kinds of divination)? And I think it more desirable to examine into the results of these things than into the causes. For there is a certain power and nature, which, by means of indications which have been observed a long time, and also by some instinct and divine inspiration, pronounces a judgment on future events.

VII. So that Carneades may well give up pressing what Panætius used also to insist upon, when he asked whether it was Jupiter who had ordained the crow to croak on the right-hand, or the raven on the left. For these occurrences have been observed for an immense series of time, and have been remarked and noted from the signification given to them by subsequent events. But there is nothing which a great length of time may not effect and establish by the use of memory retaining the different events, and handing them down in durable monuments. We may wonder at the way in which the different kinds of herbs and roots have been observed by physicians as good for the bites of beasts, for complaints of the eyes, and for wounds, the power and nature of which reason has never explained, but yet both the art and inventor of these medicines have gained universal approval from their utility. Let us also look at those things which, though of another kind, still have a resemblance to divination.

And often, too, the agitated sea
Gives certain tokens of impending storms,
When through the deep with sudden rage it swells,
And the fierce rocks, white with the briny foam,
Vie with hoarse Neptune in their sullen roar,
While the sad whistling o'er the mountain's brow
Adds horror to the crash of the iron coast.

VIII. And all your prognostics are full of presentiments derived from occurrences of this sort. Who, then, can trace back the causes of these presentiments? Though, indeed, I am aware that Boëthus the Stoic has endeavoured to do so. And indeed he has done some good to this extent, that he has explained the principle of those occurrences which take place in the sea, or in the heaven. But still, who has ever explained, with any appearance of probability, why they take place at all?

And the white gull, uprising from the waves,
With horrid scream foretells th' impending storm,
Straining its trembling throat in ceaseless cry.
Oft, too, the woodlark from his chest pours forth

Notes of unusual sadness, waking up
 The morn with grievous fear and endless plaint.
 When first Aurora routs the nightly dew,
 Sometimes the dusky crow runs o'er the shore,
 Dipping its head beneath the rising surf.¹

IX. And we see that these signs of the weather scarcely ever deceive us, though we certainly do not understand why they are so correct.

You too perceive the signs of future times,
 Children of sweetest waters; and prepare
 To utter warnings loud and salutary,
 Rousing the springs and marshes with your cries.

Yet who could ever have suspected frogs of having such perception? However, there is in rivulets, and in frogs too, a certain nature indicating something which is clear enough by itself, but more obscure to the knowledge of men.

And cloven-footed oxen gazing up
 To heaven's expense, have often inhaled the air
 Laden with moisture

I do not inquire why all this takes place, since I am acquainted with the fact that it does take place—

The mastic, ever green and ever laden
 With its rich fruit, which thrice in every year
 Doth swell to ripeness, by its triple crop
 Points out three times when men should till the earth.

Here too, again, I do not ask why this one tree should bloom three times a year, or why it should adapt the proper season for ploughing the land to the token given by its bloom. I am content with this, that, even if I do not know how everything is done, I nevertheless do know what is done. And so in respect of every kind of divination I will answer as I have done in the cases which I have already mentioned.

X. Now I know what effect the root of the scammony has as a purgative, and what the efficacy of the aristolochia is in the case of bites of serpents, (and this herb has derived its name from its discoverer, who discovered it in consequence of a dream,) and that knowledge is quite enough. I do not know why these herbs are so efficacious; and in the same way I do not know on what principle the omens which we draw from the signs furnished to us by the winds and storms proceed; but I do know, and am certain of, and thankful for their power, and the results which flow from it. Again, in

¹ All these predictions are translated by Cicero from Aratus.

the same way I know what is indicated by a fissure in the entrails of a victim, or by the appearance of the fibres; but what the cause is that these appearances have this meaning I know not. And life is full of such things; for nearly every one has recourse to the entrails of animals. Need I say more? Is it possible for any one to doubt about the power of thunder-storms? Is not this too one of the most marvellous of marvellous things? When Summanus,¹ which was a figure made of clay, standing on the top of the temple of the all-powerful and all-good Jupiter, was struck by lightning, and the head of the statue could not be found anywhere, the soothsayers said that it had been thrown down into the Tiber, and it was found in that very place which had been pointed out by the soothsayers.

XI. But who is there to whom I may more fitly appeal as an authority and as a witness than you yourself? For I have learnt the verses, and that with great pleasure, which the muse Urania pronounces in the second book of your "Consulship"—

See how almighty Jove, inflamed and bright,
 With heavenly fire fills the spacious world,
 And lights up heaven and earth with wondrous rays
 Of his divine intelligence and mind;
 Which pierces all the inmost sense of men,
 And vivifies their souls, held fast within
 The boundless caverns of eternal air.
 And would you know the high sublimest paths
 And ever revolving orbits of the stars,
 And in what constellations they abide,—
 Stars which the Greeks erratic falsely call,
 For certain order and fixed laws direct
 Their onward course; then shall you learn that all
 Is by divinest wisdom fitly ruled.
 For when you ruled the state, a consul wise,
 You noted, and with victims due approach'd,
 Propitiating the rapid stars, and strange
 Concurrence of the fiery constellations.
 Then, when you purified the Alban² mount,
 And celebrated the great Latin feast,
 Bringing pure milk, meet offering for the gods,
 You saw fierce comets bright and quivering
 With light unheard of. In the sky you saw

¹ This is usually understood to have been a statue of Pluto.

² The new consuls used to celebrate the *Feriae Latinae* on the Albanus Mons.

Fierce wars and dread nocturnal massacre ;
 That Latin feast on mournful days did fall,
 When the pale moon with dim and muffled light
 Conceal'd her head, and fled, and in the midst
 Of starry night became invisible.
 Why should I say how Phœbus' fiery beam,
 Sure herald of sad war, in mid-day set,
 Hastening at undue season to its rest,
 Or how a citizen struck with th' awful bolt,
 Hurl'd by high Jove from out a cloudless sky,
 Left the glad light of life ; or how the earth
 Quaked with affright and shook in every part ?
 Then dreadful forms, strange visions stalk'd abroad,
 Scarce shrouded by the darkness of the night,
 And warn'd the nations and the land of war.
 Then many an oracle and augury,
 Pregnant with evil fate, the soothsayers
 Pour'd from their agitated breasts. And e'en
 The Father of the Gods fill'd heaven and earth
 With signs, and tokens, and presages sure
 Of all the things which have befallen us since.

- XII. So now the year when you are at the helm,
 Collects upon itself each omen dire,
 Which when Torquatus, with his colleague Cotta,
 Sat in the curule chairs, the Lydian seer
 Of Tuscan blood breathed to affrighted Rome.
 For the great Father of the Gods, whose home
 Is on Olympus' height, with glowing hand
 Himself attack'd his sacred shrines and temples,
 And hurl'd his darts against the Capitol.
 Then fell the brazen statue, honour'd long,
 Of noble Natta ; then fell down the laws
 Graved on the sacred tablets ; while the bolts
 Spared not the images of the immortal gods.
 Here was that noble nurse o' the Roman name,
 The Wolf of Mars, who from her kindly breast
 Fed the immortal children of her god
 With the life-giving dew of sweetest milk.
 E'en her the lightning spared not ; down she fell.
 Bearing the royal babes in her descent,
 Leaving her footmarks on the pedestal.¹

¹ Great interest is attached to this passage by antiquaries, from the fact of there being a bronze statue still at Rome of a wolf suckling two children, with manifest marks of lightning on it, which is believed to be the very statue here mentioned by Cicero, and also in his third Oration against Catiline, c. viii. ; it is described by Virgil too :—

*Fecerat et viridi foetam Mavortis in antro
 Procubuisse lupam ; geminos huic ubera circum*

[Ludere

And who, unfolding records of old time,
Has found no words of sad predietion
In the dark pages of Etruscan books?—
All men, all writings, all events combined,
To warn the citizens of freeborn race

Ludere pendentes pueros, et lambere matrem
Impavidos; illam tereti cervice reflexam
Muleere alternos et corpora fingere linguâ.—*Æn.* viii. 630.

The cave of Mars was dress'd with mossy greens;
There by the wolf were laid the martial twins;
Intrepid, on her swelling dugs they hung,
The foster-dam loll'd out her fawning tongue;
They suck'd secure, while bending back her head,
She lick'd their tender limbs, and form'd them as they fed.
Dryden, Æn. viii. 835.

The statue in its present state is beautifully described by Byron:—

LXXXVIII.

And thou the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome,
She-wolf! whose brazen imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome,
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest, mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning,—dost thou yet
Guard thy immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX.

Thou dost—but all thy foster-babes are dead,
The men of iron; and the world hath rear'd
Cities from out their sepulchres.—*Childe Harold*, book iv.

It may not be out of place here, to set before the reader the beautiful description, in the first Georgic, of the prodigies which happened at Rome on the death of Cæsar:—

Denique quid vesper serus vekat. unde serenas
Ventus agat nubes, quid cogitet humidus Auster,
Sol tibi signa dabit: Solem quis dicere falsum
Audeat? ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudemque, et aperta tumescere bella;
Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam
Cum caput obscurâ nitidum ferrugine texit
Impiaque æternam timuerunt sæcula noctem,
Tempore quanquam illo tellus quoque et æquora ponti,
Obscenique canes, importunæque volueres
Signa dabant: quoties Cyclopum effervere in auras
Vidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Ætnam,
Flammarumque globos liquefactaque volvere saxa.
Armorum sonitus toto Germania cœlo
Audiit; insolitis tremuerunt motibus Alpes.

To dread impending wars of civil strife,
 And wicked bloodshed ; when the laws should fall
 In one dark rain, trampled and o'erthrown :
 Then men were warn'd to save their holy shrines,
 The statues of the gods, their city and lands,

Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita recentes
 Ingens, et simulacra modis pallentia miris
 Visa sub obscurum noctis ; pecudesque locutæ,
 Infandum ! sistunt amnes terræque dehiscunt
 Et mœstum illacrymat templis ebur, æraque sudant :
 Proluit insano contorquens vertice sylvas
 Fluviorum Rex Eridanus ; camposque per omnes
 Cum stabulis armenta trahit ; nec tempore eodem
 Tristibus aut extis fibræ apparere minaces
 Aut puteis manare cruor cessavit, et alte
 Per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes ;
 Non alias cœlo ceciderunt plura sereno
 Fulgura, nec diri toties arsere cometæ ;
 Ergo, etc.—*Virgil, Georg. i.* 488.

Which is translated by Dryden :—

The Sun reveals the secrets of the sky,
 And who dares give the source of light the lie ?
 The change of empires he oft declares,
 Fierce tumults, hidden treasons, open wars ;
 He first the fate of Cæsar did foretell,
 And pitied Rome when Rome in Cæsar fell :
 In iron clouds conceal'd the public light,
 And impious mortals fear'd eternal night.
 Nor was the fact foretold by him alone,
 Nature her-self stood forth and seconded the Sun.
 Earth, air, and seas with prodigies were sign'd,
 And birds obscene and howling dogs divin'd.
 What rocks did Ætna's bellowing mouth expire
 From her torn entrails, and what floods of fire !
 What clanks were heard in German skies afar,
 Of arms and armies rushing to the war !
 Dire earthquakes rent the solid Alps below,
 And from their summits shook th' eternal snow ;
 Pale spectres in the close of night were seen,
 And voices heard of more than mortal men.
 In silent groves dumb sheep and oxen spoke ;
 And streams ran backward, and their beds forsook ;
 The yawning earth disclosed th' abyss of hell,
 The weeping statues did the wars foretell,
 And holy sweat from brazen idols fell.
 Then rising in his might the king of floods
 Rush'd through the forests, tore the lofty woods ;
 And rolling onward with a sweepy sway,
 Bore houses, herds, and labouring hinds away.

Blood

From slaughter and destruction, and preserve
 Their ancient customs unimpair'd and free.
 And this kind hint of safety was subjoin'd,
 That when a splendid statue of great Jove,¹
 In godlike beauty, on its base was raised,
 With eyes directed to Sol's eastern gate;
 Then both the senate and the people's bands,
 Duly forewarn'd, should see the secret plots
 Of wicked men, and disappoint their spite.
 This statue, slowly form'd and long delay'd,
 At length by you, when consul, has been placed
 Upon its holy pedestal;—'tis now
 That the great sceptred Jupiter has graced
 His column, on a well-appointed hour:
 And at the self-same moment faction's crimes

Blood sprang from wells; wolves howl'd in towns by night;
 And boding victims did the priests affright.
 Such peals of thunder never pour'd from high,
 Nor forked lightnings flash'd from such a sullen sky:
 Red meteors ran across the ethereal space;
 Stars disappear'd, and comets took their place.

Which Shakspeare has imitated with reference to the same event:—

Cal. Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,
 Yet now they fright me: there is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch:
 A lioness hath whelped in the streets,
 And graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead.
 Pierce, fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol:
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air;
 Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan;
 And ghosts did shriek and squeak about the streets.
 O Caesar, these things are beyond all use,
 And I do fear them

When beggars die there are no comets seen;
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

Cæs. What say the augurers?

Serv. They would not have you to stir forth to-day.
 Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
 They could not find a heart within the beast.

¹ This refers to the column meant to serve as a pedestal for the statue of Jupiter, mentioned in the second book of this treatise, and also in the second oration against Catiline, as having been ordered in the consulship of Torquatus and Cotta, but not completed till the year of Cicero's consulship.

Were by the loyal Gauls reveal'd and shown
To the astonish'd multitude and senate.

XIII. Well then did ancient men, whose monuments
You keep among you,—they who will maintain
Virtue and moderation; by these arts
Ruling the lands and people subject to them :
Well, too, your holy sires, whose spotless faith,
And piety, and deep sagacity
Have far surpass'd the men of other lands,
Worshipp'd in every age the mighty Gods.
They with sagacious care these things foresaw,
Spending in virtuous studies all their leisure,
And in the shady Academic groves,
And fair Lyceum : where they well pour'd forth
The treasures of their pure and learned hearts.
And, like them, you have been by virtue placed,
To save your country, in the imminent breach ;
Still with philosophy you soothe your cares,
With prudent care dividing all your hours
Between the Muses and your country's claims.

Will you then be able to persuade your mind to speak against the arguments which I adduce on the subject of divination, you being a man who have performed such exploits as you have done, and who have so admirably composed those verses which I have just recited? What—do you ask me, Carneades, why these things take place in this manner, or by what art it is possible for them to be brought about? I confess that I do not know; but that they do happen, I assert that you yourself are a witness. Yes, they happen by chance, you say. Is it so? Can anything be done by chance which has in itself all the features of reality? Four dice when thrown may by chance come up sixes. Do you think that if you were to throw four hundred dice it would be possible for them all to come up sixes by any chance in the world? Paints scattered at random on a canvass may by chance represent the features of a human face; but do you think that you could by any chance scattering of colours represent the beauty of the Coan Venus?¹ Suppose a pig by burrowing in the ground with his snout were to make the letter A, would you on that account think it possible that the animal should by chance write out the Andromache of Ennius? Carneades used to tell a story that

¹ This refers to the celebrated picture of Venus Anadyomene, painted by Apelles, who was a native of Cos.

in cutting stones in the stone-quarries at Chios, there was once discovered a natural head of a Pan. I dare say there may have been a figure not wholly unlike such a head, but still certainly it was not such that you could fancy it wrought by Scopas.¹ For this is the nature of things, that chance can never imitate reality to perfection.

XIV. But, you will say, things which have been predicted sometimes fail to happen. What act is not liable to this observation? I mean of those acts which proceed on conjecture, and are founded on opinion. Is not medicine to be considered a real art? And yet how often is it deceived! Need I say more? Are not pilots of ships often deceived? Did not the army of the Greeks, and the captains of all that numerous fleet, depart from Troy, as Pacuvius says—

So glad at their departure, that they gazed
In idle mirth upon the wanton fish,
And never ceased from laughing at their gambols;
Meanwhile at sunset the vast sea grows rough,
The darkness lowers, black night and clouds surround them.

Did, however, the shipwreck of so many illustrious generals and sovereigns prove that there was no such art as navigation? Or is the science of generals good for nothing because a most illustrious general was lately put to flight, after the total loss of his army? Or are we to say that there is no room for the display of sound principles of politics, or wisdom in the administration of affairs of state, because Cnæus Pompeius was often deceived, and even Cato and you yourself have been deceived in more instances than one? The same rule applies to the answers of soothsayers, and to all divination which rests on opinion: for it depends wholly on conjecture, and has no means of advancing further. And that perhaps sometimes deceives us, but still it more frequently directs us to the truth. For it is traced back to all eternity. And as in the infinite duration of time, things have happened in an almost countless number of ways with the self-same indications preceding each occurrence, an art has

¹ Scopas was a Parian, flourishing about 360 B. C. He was one of the greatest architects and sculptors of antiquity, and is mentioned as such by Horace, who says:—

Divite me scilicet artium
Quas aut Parrhasius protulit aut Scopas,
Hic saxo, liquidis ille coloribus
Solers nunc hominem ponere nunc Deum.

been concocted and reduced to rules from a frequent observation and notice of the same circumstances.

XV. But your auspices, how clear—how sure they are! which at this time are known nothing of by the Roman augurs, (excuse me for saying this so plainly,) though they are maintained by the Cilicians, Pamphylians, Pisidians, and Lycians. For why should I mention that man connected with us in ties of hospitality, that most illustrious and excellent man, king Deiotarus? He never does anything whatever without taking the auspices. And it happened once that he had started on a journey which he had arranged and determined some time before; but, being warned by the flight of an eagle, he returned back again, and the very next night the house in which he would have been lodging if he had persisted in his journey, fell to the ground. And he was so moved by this occurrence, that, as he himself used to tell me, he often turned back in the same way in a journey, even when he had advanced many days on it. And what is most remarkable in his conduct is, that after he had been deprived by Cæsar of his tetrarchy, his kingdom, and his property, he still asserted that he did not repent of obeying those auspices which had promised success to him when he was setting out to join Pompey; for he considered that the authority of the senate, and the liberty of the Roman people, and the dignity of the empire had been upheld by his arms; and that those birds had taken good care of his honour and real interests, inasmuch as they had been his counsellors in adhering to the claims of good faith and duty; for that character was a thing dearer to him than his possessions. And in saying this he seems to me to form a very just estimate. For our magistrates at times use compulsion. For it is quite impossible, if a cake is thrown down before a chicken, but what some crumbs must fall out of his mouth when he feeds. And as you have it set down in your books that a *tripudium* takes place if any of the food falls on the ground, so you also call this compulsory augury which I have spoken of *tripudium solistimum*.¹ And so, as that wise Cato complains, owing to

¹ “*Tripudium*, from *terripavium* (see Cic. Div. ii. 34), a stamping on the ground. In divination, *tripudium*, or *tripudium solistimum*, when the birds (*pulli*) ate so greedily that the food fell from their mouths, and so rebounded on the ground, which was regarded as a good omen.” —*Riddle and Arnold, Lat. Dict.*

the negligence of the college, many auguries and many auspices have been wholly lost and abandoned.

XVI. Formerly there was, I may almost say, no affair of importance, not even if it only related to private business, which was transacted without taking the auspices. And this is proved even now by the *Auspices Nuptiarum*, who, though the custom has fallen into disuse, still preserve the name. For just as we now consult the entrails of victims, though even that very practice is observed less now than it used to be, so in ancient times, before all transactions of importance, men used to consult birds; and, therefore, from want of paying proper regard to ill omens, we often run into alarming and destructive dangers:—as Publius Claudius, the son of Appius Cæcus, and his colleague Lucius Junius, lost a fine fleet, because they had put to sea in defiance of the omens. And, indeed, something of the same kind befel Agamemnon; for he, when the Grecians had begun

To murmur loudly, and with open scorn
T' asperse the skill of th' holy soothsayers,
Bade the crew bend the sails and put to sea,
Choosing the people's voice before the omens.

But why need we look for old examples of this? We have ourselves seen what happened to Marcus Crassus, because he neglected the notice which was given to him that the omens were unfavourable. On which occasion, Appius, your colleague, a good augur, as I have often heard you say, branded, when he was censor, an excellent man and a most illustrious citizen, Caius Ateius, without sufficient consideration, because he had cooperated in falsifying the auspices. However, let that pass. It may have been the duty of the censor to do so, if he thought that the auspices were falsified. But it certainly was not the duty of an augur to set down in the books that this was the cause of a fearful calamity befalling the Roman people. For even if that was the cause of the calamity, still the fault was not in the man who announced the state of the auspices, but in him who disregarded the announcement. For that the announcement was a correct one, as the same augur and censor bears witness, was proved by the event; for if the announcement had been false, it could not possibly have caused any calamity at all. In truth,

prognostics of calamity, like other auspices, and omens, and tokens, do not produce causes why anything should happen, but merely give notice of what will happen unless you provide against it. It was not, therefore, the announcement of unfavourable omens, made by Ateius, which was the cause of calamity; all that he did was, by declaring to him what signs had been seen, to warn him what would happen if he did not take precautions against it. Accordingly, either that announcement had no effect at all, or else if, as Appius thinks, it had an effect, the effect was this, that guilt was attached, not to the man who gave the warning, but to him who did not attend to it.

XVII. What shall I say more? From whence have you received that staff (*lituus*) of yours, which is the most celebrated ensign of your augurship? That is the staff with which Romulus parted out the several districts, when he founded the city. And that staff of Romulus, (that is to say, a stick curved and slightly bent forward at the top, which has derived its name from its resemblance to the trumpet (*lituus*) used in sounding signals,) having been laid up in the meeting-house of the Salii, which was in the Palatine-hill, when that house was burnt to the ground, was found unhurt. What more need I say? Who of the ancient authors is there who does not relate what an arrangement of the districts of the city was made, many years after the time of Romulus, in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, by Attius Navius, who employed his staff in this manner? And it is said that he, when a boy, was forced through poverty to act as a swincherd; and one day, having lost one of his pigs, he made a vow that if he recovered it, he would give the god the finest grape which there was in the whole vineyard. Accordingly, when he had found the pig, he placed himself in the middle of the vineyard, with his eyes directed towards the south; and after he had divided the vineyard into four divisions, and had been directed by the birds to disregard three of the portions, in the fourth division, which remained, he found a grape of most wonderful size, as we find recorded in our books. And when this fact became known, all the neighbours used to consult him on all their affairs, until he gained a great name and reputation; in consequence of which king Priscus sent for him.

And when he had come to the king, he, wishing to make proof of his skill in augury, told him that he was thinking of something, and asked him whether it could possibly be done. He, having taken an augury, answered that it could. But Tarquin said that he had been thinking that it was possible that a whetstone might be cut through by a razor. On this Attius bade him try; and accordingly a whetstone was brought into the assembly, and, in the sight of king and people, cut through with a razor. And in consequence of this, it happened that Tarquinius always consulted Attius Navius as an augur, and that the people also were used to refer their private affairs to him. And we are told that that whetstone and that razor were buried in the comitium, and that the puteal was built over it.

Let us deny everything; let us burn our annals; let us say that all these statements are false; let us, in short, confess everything rather than that the Gods regard the affairs of mankind. What? do not even your writings about Tiberius Gracchus sanction the theories of augurs and haruspices? For when he had unintentionally erected a tent to take the auspices informally, because he had crossed the pomœrium without taking the auspices, he held there the comitia for the election of the consuls. (The matter is one of notoriety, and committed to writing by you yourself.) However, Tiberius Gracchus, who was himself an augur, ratified the authority of the auspices by a confession of his error, and added great authority to the system of the haruspices; who, having at the recent comitia been introduced into the senate, asserted that the person who proposed the candidates to the comitia had no right to do so.

XVIII. I therefore agree with those authors who have asserted that there are two kinds of divination; one partaking of art, and the other wholly devoid of it. For art is visible in those persons who pursue anything new by conjecture, and have learnt to judge of what is old by observation. But those men, on the other hand, are devoid of art, who give way to presentiments of future events, not proceeding by reason or conjecture, nor on the observation and consideration of particular signs, but yielding to some excitement of mind, or to some unknown influence subject to no precise rules or restraint, (as is often the case with men who dream,

and sometimes with those who deliver predictions in a frenzied manner,) as Bacis¹ of Bœotia, Epimenides² the Cretan, and the Erythrean Sibyl. And under this head we ought also to rank oracles; not those which are drawn by lot, but those which are uttered under the influence of some divine instinct and inspiration. Although even lots are not to be despised where they are sanctioned by the authority of antiquity, like those which we are told used to rise out of the earth; which, however, are drawn in such a manner as to be apposite to the subject under consideration, which, indeed, is a thing that I conceive to be very possible by divine management. The interpreters of all of which appear to me to come very near to the divining power of those whose interpreters they are (just as those grammarians do who are the interpreters of poets). What proof of sagacity is it, then, to wish to disparage things sanctioned by antiquity, by vile calumnies? I admit that I cannot discover the cause. Perhaps it lies hid, involved in the obscurity of nature. For God has not intended me to understand these matters, but only to use them. I will use them, then; nor will I be persuaded to think, either that all Etruria is mad on the subject of the entrails of victims, or that the same nation is all wrong about lightnings, or that it interprets prodigies fallaciously, when it has often happened that subterranean noises and crashes, often that earthquakes, have predicted, with terrible truth, many of the evils which have befallen our own republic and other states.

Why should I say more? The fact of a mule having brought forth is much ridiculed by some people; but because this parturition did take place in the case of an animal of natural barrenness, was there not an incredible crop of evils predicted by the soothsayers? Need I go further? Did not Tiberius Gracchus, the son of Publius Gracchus, who had been twice consul and censor, and who was also an augur of the

¹ Bacis was believed to have lived and prophesied at Heleon, in Bœotia, being inspired by the nymphs of the Corycian cave. Some of his prophecies are given us by Herodotus, viii. 20, 77; ix. 43. (See also Aristophanes, Eq. 123; Pax, 1009.)

² Epimenides was a poet and prophet of Crete, who lived about 590 B. C. He was sent for by the Athenians to purify Athens when it was visited by a plague, in consequence of the sacrilege of Cylon. He is said to have lived to a great age.

highest skill and reputation, and a wise man, and a most virtuous citizen,—did not he (as Caius Gracchus, his son, has left recorded in his writings), when two snakes were caught in his house, convoke the soothsayers? And the answer which they gave him was, that if he let the male escape, his wife would die in a short time; but if he let the female escape, he would die himself: on which he thought it more becoming to encounter an early death himself, than to expose the youthful daughter of Publius Africanus to it. Accordingly, he released the female snake, and died himself a few days afterwards.

XIX. Let us, after this, laugh at the soothsayers; let us call them useless and triflers, and despise those men whose principles the wisest men, and subsequent events and occurrences, have often proved. Let us despise also the Babylonians, and those who on mount Caucasus observe the stars of heaven, and follow all their revolutions in regular number and motion. Let us, say I, condemn all those people for folly, or vanity, or impudence, who, as they themselves assert, have exact records for four hundred and seventy thousand years carefully noted down, and let us decide that they are telling lies, and have no regard as to what the judgment of future ages concerning them will be. Come, then, you vain and deceitful barbarians, has the history of the Greeks likewise spoken falsely? Who is ignorant of the answer (that I may speak at present of natural divination) which the Pythian Apollo gave to Cræsus, to the Athenians, the Lacedæmonians, the Tegeans, the Argives, and the Corinthians? Chrysippus has collected a countless list of oracles—not one without a witness and authority of sufficient weight; but as they are known to you, I will pass them over. This one I will mention and defend. Would that oracle at Delphi have ever been so celebrated and illustrious, and so loaded with such splendid gifts from all nations and kings, if all ages had not had experience of the truth of its predictions? At present, you will say, it has no such reputation. Granted, then, that it has a lower reputation now, because the truth of oracles is less notorious; still I affirm that it would not have had such a reputation then, if it had not been distinguished for extraordinary accuracy. But it is possible that that power in the earth, which excited the mind of the Pythian priestess by divine inspiration, may have

disappeared through old age, just as we know that some rivers have dried up, or become changed and diverted into another channel. However, let it be owing to whatever you please; for it is a great question: only let this fact remain—which cannot be denied, unless we will overthrow all history—that that oracle told the truth for many ages.

XX. However, let us pass over the oracles; let us come to dreams. And Chrysippus discussing them, after collecting many minute instances, does the same that Antipater does when he investigates this subject, and those dreams which were explained according to the interpretation of Antipho, which indeed prove the acuteness of the interpreter, but still are not examples of such importance as to have been worthy of being brought forward.

The mother of Dionysius—of that Dionysius, I mean, who was the tyrant of Syracuse, as it is recorded by Philistus, a man of learning and diligence, and who was a contemporary of the tyrant—when she was pregnant with this very Dionysius, dreamt that she had become the mother of a little Satyr. The interpreters of prodigies, who at that time were in Sicily called Galeotæ, gave her for answer when she consulted them about it, (according to the story told by Philistus,) that the child whom she was about to bring forth would be the most illustrious man of Greece, with very lasting good fortune. Am I recalling you to the fables of the Greek poets and those of our country? For the Vestal Virgin, in Ennius, says—

The agitated dame with trembling limbs
Brings in a lamp, and with unbridled tears,
Starting from broken sleep, pours forth these words:—
O daughter of the fair Eurydice,
You whom my father loved, see strength and life
Desert my limbs, and leave me helpless all.
I thought I saw a man of handsome form
Seize me, and bear me through the willow groves,
Along the river banks and places yet unknown.
And then alone,—I tell you true, my sister,—
I seem'd to wander, and with tardy steps
To seek to trace you, but my efforts fail'd;
While no clear path did guide my doubtful feet.
And then, I thought, my father thus address'd me,
With evil-boding voice:—Alas! my daughter,
What numerous woes by you must be endured;
Though fortune shall in after times arise

From out of the waters of this river here.
 Thus, sister, spake my father, and then vanish'd ;
 Nor, though much wish'd for, did he once return.
 In vain, with many tears, I raised my hands
 Up to the azure vault of the highest heaven,
 And with caressing voice invoked his name,
 Or seem'd to do so. And 'twas long ere sleep,
 Freight with such sad dreams, did quit my breast.

XXI. Now these accounts, though they perhaps may be the mere inventions of the poets, still are not inconsistent with the general character of dreams. We may grant that that is a fictitious one by which Priam is represented to have been disturbed :—

Queen Hecuba dream'd—an ominous dream of fate—
 That she did bear no human child of flesh,
 But a fierce blazing torch. Priam, alarm'd,
 Ponder'd with anxious fear the fatal dream ;
 And sought the gods with smoking sacrifice.
 Then the diviner's aid he did entreat,
 With many a prayer to the prophetic god,
 If haply he might learn the dream's intent.
 Thus spake Apollo with all-knowing mind :—
 " The queen shall have a son, who, if he grow
 To man's estate, shall set all Troy in flames—
 The ruin of his city and his land."

Let us grant, then, that these dreams are, as I have said, merely poetic fictions, and let us add the dream of Æneas, which Numerius Fabius Pictor relates in his *Annals*, as one of the same kind ; in which Æneas is represented as foreseeing, in his trance, all his future exploits and adventures.

XXII. But let us come nearer home. What kind of dream was that of Tarquin the Proud, which the poet Accius, in his *Tragedy of Brutus*, puts into the mouth of Tarquin himself?—

Sleep closed my weary eyelids, when a shepherd
 Brought me two rams. The one I sacrificed ;
 The other rushing at me with wild force
 Hurl'd me upon the ground. Prostrate I gazed
 Upon the heavens, when a new prodigy
 Dazzled my eyes. The flashing orb of day
 Took a new course, diverging to the right,
 With all his kindling beams strangely transversed.

Of this dream the diviners gave the following interpretation—
 Dreams are in general reflex images
 Of things that men in waking hours have known ;
 But sometimes dreams of loftier character

Rise in the tranèd soul, inspired by Jove,
Prophetic of the fature. 'Then beware
Of him, whom thou dost think as stupid as
The ram thou dreamest of. For in his breast
Dwells manliest wisdom. He may yet expel
Thee from thy kingdom. Mark the prophecy :
'That change in the sun's course thou didst behold,
Betoken'd revolution in the state,
And as the sun did turn from left to right, we predict
So shall that revolution meet success.

XXIII. Let us again return to foreign events. Heraclides of Pontus, an intelligent man, who was one of Plato's disciples and followers, writes that the mother of Phalaris fancied that she saw in a dream the statues of the gods whom Phalaris had consecrated in his house. Among them it appeared to her that Mercury held a cup in his right hand, from which he poured blood, which as soon as it touched the earth gushed forth like a fresh fountain, and filled the house with streaming gore. The dream of the mother was too fatally realized by the cruelty of the son.

Why need I also relate, out of the history of Persia by Dinon, the interpretations which the Magi gave to the celebrated prince, Cyrus? For he dreamed that beholding the sun at his feet, he thrice endeavoured to grasp it in his hands, but the sun rolled away and departed, and escaped from him. The Magi (who were accounted sages and teachers in Persia) thus interpreted the dream, saying, that the three attempts of Cyrus to catch the sun in his hands, signified that he would reign thirty years; and what they predicted really came to pass; for he was forty years old when he began to reign, and he reached the age of seventy. Among all barbarous nations, indeed, we meet with proof that they likewise possess the gift of divination and presentiment. The Indian Calanus, when led to execution, said, while ascending the funeral pile, "O what a glorious departure from life! when, as happened to Hercules, after my body has been consumed by fire, my soul shall depart to a world of light." And when Alexander asked him if he had anything to say to him; "Yes," replied he, "we shall soon meet again;" and this prophecy was soon fulfilled, for a few days afterwards Alexander died in Babylon.

I will quit the subject of dreams for awhile, and return to them presently. On the very night that Olympias was

delivered of Alexander, the temple of Diana of the Ephesians was burned; and when the morning dawned, the Magi declared that the ruin and destroyer of Asia had been born that night. So much for the Magi and the Indians. Now let us return to dreams.

XXIV. Cœlius relates that Hannibal, wishing to remove a golden column from the temple of Juno Lacinia, and not knowing whether it was solid gold or merely gilt, bored a hole in it; and as he had found it solid, he determined to take it away. But the following night Juno appeared to him in a dream, and warned him against doing so, and threatened him that if he did, she would take care that he should lose an eye with which he could see well. He was too prudent a man to neglect this threat; and therefore, of the gold which had been abstracted from the column in boring it, he made a little heifer, which he fixed on the capital.

And the same story is told in the Grecian history of Silenus, whom Cœlius follows. And he was an author who was particularly diligent in relating the exploits of Hannibal. He says that when Hannibal had taken Saguntum, he dreamed in his sleep that he was summoned to a council of the gods, and that when he arrived at it, Jupiter commanded him to carry the war into Italy, and one of the deities in council was appointed to be his conductor in the enterprise. He therefore began his march under the direction of this divine protector, who enjoined him not to look behind him. Hannibal, however, could not long keep in his obedience, but yielded to a great desire to look back, when he immediately beheld a huge and terrible monster, surrounded with serpents, which, wherever it advanced, destroyed all the trees, and shrubs, and buildings. He then, marvelling at this, inquired of the god what this monster might mean; and the god replied, that it signified the desolation of Italy; and commanded him to advance without delay, and not to concern himself with the evils that lay behind him and in his rear.

In the history of Agathocles it is said, that Hamilcar the Carthaginian, when he was besieging Syracuse, dreamed that he heard a voice announcing to him, that he should sup on the succeeding day in Syracuse. When the morning dawned a great sedition arose in his camp between the Carthaginian and Sicilian soldiers. And when the Syracusans found this

out, they made a vigorous sally and attacked the camp unexpectedly, and succeeded in making Hamilcar prisoner while alive, and thus his dream was verified. All history is full of similar accounts; and the experience of real life is equally rich in them.

That illustrious man, Publius Decius, the son of Quintus Decius, the first of the Decii who was a consul, being a military tribune in the consulship of Marcus Valerius and Aulus Cornelius, when our army was sorely pressed by the Samnites, and being accustomed to expose himself to great personal danger in battle, was warned to take greater care of himself; on which he replied (as our annals report), that he had had a dream, which informed him that he should die with the greatest glory, while engaged in the midst of the enemy. For that time he succeeded in happily rescuing our army from the perils that surrounded it. But three years after, when he was consul, he devoted himself to death for his country, and threw himself armed among the ranks of the Latins; by which gallant action the Latins were defeated and destroyed: and his death was so glorious that his son desired a similar fate.

XXV. But let us now come, if you please, to the dreams of philosophers. We read in Plato that Socrates, when he was in the public prison at Athens, said to his friend Crito that he should die in three days, for that he had seen in a dream a woman of extreme beauty who called him by his name, and quoted in his presence this verse of Homer—

On the third day you'll reach the fruitful Phthia."¹

And it is said that it happened just as it had been foretold.

Again, what a man, and how great a man, is Xenophon the pupil of Socrates! He, too, in his account of that war in which he accompanied the younger Cyrus, relates the dreams which he saw, the accomplishment of which was marvellous. Shall we then say that Xenophon was a liar or dotard? What shall we say, too, of Aristotle, a man of singular and almost divine genius? Was he deceived himself, or does he wish others to be deceived, when he informs us that Eudemus of Cyprus, his own intimate friend, on his way to Macedonia, came to Pheræ, a celebrated city of Thessaly,

¹ Hom. Il. ix. 363 :—

Ἡματί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίῃν ἐρίβωλον ἰκοίμην.

which was then under the cruel sway of the tyrant Alexander. In that town he was seized with a severe illness, so that he was given over by all the physicians, when he beheld in a dream a young man of extreme beauty, who informed him that in a short time he should recover, and also the tyrant Alexander would die in a few days; and that Eudemus himself would, after five years' absence, at length return home. Aristotle relates that the first two predictions of this dream were immediately accomplished; for Eudemus speedily recovered, and the tyrant perished at the hands of his wife's brother; and that towards the end of the fifth year, when, in consequence of that dream, there was a hope that he would return into Cyprus from Sicily, they heard that he had been slain in a battle near Syracuse; from which it appeared that his dream was susceptible of being interpreted as meaning, that when the soul of Eudemus had quitted his body, it would then appear to have signified the return home.

To the philosophers we may add the testimony of Scphocles, a most learned man, and as a poet quite divine, who, when a golden goblet of great weight had been stolen from the temple of Hercules, saw in a dream the god himself appearing to him, and declaring who was the robber. Sophocles paid no attention to this vision, though it was repeated more than once. When it had presented itself to him several times, he proceeded up to the court of Areopagus, and laid the matter before them. On this, the judges issued an order for the arrest of the offender nominated by Sophocles. On the application of the torture the criminal confessed his guilt, and restored the goblet; from which event this temple of Hercules was afterwards called the temple of Hercules the Indicato.

XXVI. But why do I continue to cite the Greeks? when, somehow or other, I feel more interest in the examples of my fellow-countrymen. All our historians,—the Fabii, the Gellii, and, more recently, Cœlius, bear witness to similar facts. In the Latin war, when they first celebrated the votive games in honour of the gods, the city was suddenly roused to arms, and the games being thus interrupted, it was necessary to appoint new ones. Before their commencement, however, just as the people had taken their places in the circus, a slave who had been beaten with rods was led through the circus,

bearing a gibbet. After this event, a certain Roman rustic had a dream, in which an apparition informed him that he had been displeased with the president of the games, and the rustic was ordered to apprise the senate of that fact. He, however, did not dare to do so; on which the apparition appeared a second time, and warned him not to provoke him to exert his power. Even then he could not summon courage to obey, and presently his son died. After this, the same admonition was repeated in his dreams for the third time. Then the peasant himself became extremely ill, and related the cause of his trouble to his friends, by whose advice he was carried on a litter to the senate-house; and as soon as he had related his dreams to the senate, he recovered his health and strength, and returned home on foot perfectly cured. Thereupon, the truth of his dreams being admitted by the senate, it is related that these games were repeated a second time.

It is recorded in the history of the same Cœlius, that Caius Gracchus informed many persons that during the time that he was soliciting the quæstorship, his brother Tiberius Gracchus appeared to him in a dream, and said to him, that he might delay as much as he pleased, but that nevertheless he was fated to die by the same death which he himself had suffered. Cœlius asserts that he heard this fact, and related it to many persons, before Caius Gracchus had become tribune of the people. And what can be more certain than such a dream as this?

XXVII. Who, again, can despise those two dreams, which are so frequently dwelt upon by the Stoics?—one concerning Simonides, who, having found the dead body of a man who was a stranger to him lying in the road, buried it. Having performed this office, he was about to embark in a ship, when the man whom he had buried appeared to him in a dream at night, and warned him not to undertake the voyage, for that if he did he would perish by shipwreck. Therefore, he returned home again, but all the other people who sailed in that vessel were lost.

The other dream, which is a very celebrated one, is related in the following manner:—Two Arcadians, who were intimate friends, were travelling together, and arriving at Megara, one of them took up his quarters at an inn, the

other at a friend's house. After supper, when they had both gone to bed, the Arcadian, who was staying at his friend's house, saw an apparition of his fellow-traveller at the inn, who prayed him to come to his assistance immediately, as the innkeeper was going to murder him. Alarmed at this intimation, he started from his sleep; but on recollection, thinking it nothing but an idle dream, he lay down again. Presently, the apparition appeared to him again in his sleep, and entreated him, though he would not come to his assistance while yet alive, at least not to leave his death unavenged. He told him further, that the innkeeper had first murdered him, and then cast him into a dungcart, where he lay covered with filth; and begged him to go early to the gate of the town, before any cart could leave the town. Much excited by this second vision, he went early next morning to the gate of the town, and met with the driver of the cart, and asked him what he had in his waggon. The driver, upon this question, ran away in a fright. The dead body was then discovered, and the innkeeper, the evidence being clear against him, was brought to punishment.

XXVIII. What can be more akin to divination than such a dream as this?

But why do I relate any more ancient instances of similar things, when such dreams have occurred to ourselves? for I have often told you mine, and I have as often heard you talk of yours.

When I was proconsul in Asia, it appeared to me as I slept, that I saw you riding on horseback till you reached the banks of a great river, and that you were suddenly thrown off and precipitated into the waters, and so disappeared. At this I trembled exceedingly, being overcome with fear and apprehension. But suddenly you reappeared before me with a joyful countenance, and, with the same horse, ascended the opposite bank, and then we embraced each other. It is easy to conjecture the signification of such a dream as this; and hence the learned interpreters of Asia predicted to me that those events would take place which afterwards did come to pass.

I now come to your own dream, which I have sometimes heard from yourself, but more often from our friend Sallust. He used to say, that in that flight and exile of yours, which was

so glorious for you, so calamitous for our country, you stayed awhile in a certain villa of the territory of Atina, when, having sat up a great part of the night, you fell into a deep and heavy slumber towards the morning. And from this slumber your attendants would not awake you, as you had given orders that you were not to be disturbed, though your journey was sufficiently urgent.

When at length you awoke about the second hour of the day, you related to Sallust the following dream:—That it had seemed to you that, as you were wandering sorrowfully through some solitary district, Caius Marius appeared to you with his fasces covered with laurel, and that he asked you why you were afflicted. And when you informed him that you had been driven from your country by the violence of the disaffected, he seized your right hand, and urged you to be of good cheer, and ordered the lictor nearest to him to lead you to his monument, saying, that there you should find security. Sallust told me, that upon hearing this dream, he himself exclaimed at once that your return would be speedy and glorious; and that you also appeared to be delighted with your dream. A short time afterwards I was informed, as you well know, that it was in the monument of Marius that, on the instance of that excellent and famous consul Lentulus, that most honourable decree of the senate was passed for your recal, which was applauded with shouts of incredible exultation in a very full assembly; so that, as you yourself observed, no dream could have a higher character of divination than this which occurred to you at Atina.

XXIX. But you will say that there are likewise many false dreams. No doubt there are some which are perhaps obscure to us; but, even allow that there are some which are actually false, what argument is that against those which are true?—of which, indeed, there would be a great many more if we went to bed in perfect health; but as it is, from our being overcharged with wine and luxuries, all our perceptions become troubled and confused. Consider what Socrates, in the Republic of Plato, says on this subject.

“When,” says he, “that part of the soul which is capable of intelligence and reason is subdued and reduced to languor, then that part in which there is a species of ferocity and

uncivilized savageness being excited by immoderate eating and drinking, exults in our sleep and wantons about unrestrainedly ; and therefore all kinds of visions present themselves to it, such as are destitute of all sense or reason, in which we appear to be giving ourselves up to incest and all kinds of bestiality, or to be committing bloody murders, and massacres, and all kinds of execrable deeds, with a triumphant defiance of all prudence and decency. But in the case of a man who is accustomed to a sober and regular life, when he commits himself to sleep, then that part of his soul which is the seat of intellect and reason is still active and awake, being replenished with a banquet of virtuous thoughts ; and that portion which is nourished by pleasure, is neither destroyed by exhaustion nor swollen by satiety, either of which is accustomed to impair the vigour of the soul, whether nature is deficient in anything, or superabundant or overstocked ; and that third division also, in which the vehemence of anger is situated, is lulled and restrained ; so, consequently, it happens, that owing to the due regulation of the two more violent portions of the soul, the third, or intellectual part, shines forth conspicuously, and is fresh and active for the admission of dreams ; and therefore the visions of sleep which present themselves before it are tranquil and true."

XXX. Such are the very words of Plato. Shall we, then, prefer listening to the doctrine of Epicurus on this point ? As for Carneades, he sometimes says one thing and sometimes another, from his mere fondness for discussion. And yet, what are the sentiments which he utters ? At all events, they are never expressed either with elegance or propriety. And will you prefer such a man as this to Plato and Socrates ? men who, even if they were to give no reason for their tenets, should, by the mere authority of their names, outweigh these minute philosophers.

Plato then asserts that we should bring our bodies into such a disposition before we go to sleep as to leave nothing which may occasion error or perturbation in our dreams. For this reason, perhaps, Pythagoras laid it down as a rule, that his disciples should not eat beans, because this food is very flatulent, and contrary to that tranquillity of mind which a truth-seeking spirit should possess.

When, therefore, the mind is thus separated from the society and contagion of the body, it recollects things past, examines things present, and anticipates things to come. For the body of one who is asleep lies like that of one who is dead, while the spirit is full of vitality and vigour. And it will be yet more so after death, when it will have got rid of the body altogether; and therefore we see that even on the approach of death it becomes much more divine. For it often happens that those who are attacked by a severe and mortal malady, foresee that their death is at hand. And in this state they often behold ghosts and phantoms of the dead. Then they are more than ever anxious about their reputations; and they who have lived otherwise than as they ought, then most especially repent of their sins.

And that the dying are often possessed of the gift of divination, Posidonius confirms by that notorious example of a certain Rhodian who, being on his death-bed, named six of his contemporaries, saying which of them would die first, which second, which next to him, and so on.

There are, he imagines, besides this, three ways in which men dream under the immediate impulse of the Gods: one, when the mind intuitively perceives things by the relation which it bears to the Gods; the second, arising from the fact of the air being full of immortal spirits, in whom all the signs of truth are, as it were, stamped and visible; the third, when the Gods themselves converse with sleepers,—and that, as I have said before, takes place more especially at the approach of death, enabling the minds of the dying to anticipate future events. An instance of this is the prediction of Calanus, of whom I have already spoken. Another is that of Hector, in Homer, who, when dying himself, foretels the approaching death of Achilles.

XXXI. If there were no such thing as divination, Plautus would not have been so much applauded for the following line:—

My mind presaged (*præsagibat*), when I first went out,
That I was going on a fruitless journey:—

for the verb *sagio* means, to feel shrewdly. Hence old women are sometimes called *sagæ* (witches), because they are ambitious of knowing many things; and dogs are called *sagacious*. Whoever, therefore, *sagit* (knows) before the event has come

to pass, is said *præsagire* (to have the power of knowing the future beforehand).

There exists, therefore, in the mind a presentiment, which strikes the soul from without, and which is enclosed in the soul by divine operation. If this becomes very vivid, it is termed frenzy, as happens when the soul, being abstracted from the body, is stirred up by a divine inspiration.

- What sudden transport fires my virgin soul!
My mother, oh, my mother!—dearest name
Of all dear names! But oh, my breast is full
Of divination and impending fates,
While dread Apollo with his mighty impulse
Urges me onward. Sisters, my sweet sisters!
I grieve to anticipate the coming fate
Of our most royal parents. You are all
More filial and more dutiful than I.
I only am enjoined this cruel task,
To utter imminent ruin. You do serve them;
I injure them; and your obedience
Shines well, set-off by my disloyal rage.¹

O what a tender, moral, and delicate poem! though the beauty of it does not affect the question. What I wish to prove is, that that frenzy often predicts what is true and real.

I see the blazing torch of Troy's last doom,
Fire, and massacre, and death. Arm, citizens!
Bring aid and quench the flames.

In the following lines, it is not so much Cassandra who speaks, as the Deity enclosed in human form:—

Already is the fleet prepared to sail;
It bears destruction—rapidly it speeds:
A dreadful army traverses the shores,
Destined to slaughter.

I seem to be doing nothing but quoting tragedies and fables.

XXXII. I would mention a story I have heard from yourself, and that not an imaginary, but a real circumstance, and closely related to our present discussion. Cains Coponius, a skilful general, and a man of the highest character for learning and wisdom, who commanded the fleet of the Rhodians, with the appointment of prætor, came to you at Dyrriachium, and informed you that a certain sailor in a Rhodian galley had predicted that, in less than a month, Greece would

¹ This is a quotation from Pacuvius's play of Hercules; the speaker is Cassandra.

be deluged with blood, that Dyrrhachium would be pillaged, and that the people would flee and take to their ships; that, looking back in their flight, they would see a terrible conflagration. He added, moreover, that the fleet of the Rhodians would soon return, and retire to Rhodes. You told me that you yourself were surprised at this intelligence, and that Marcus Varro and Marcus Cato, both men of great learning, who were with you, were exceedingly alarmed. A few days afterwards, Labienus, having escaped from the battle of Pharsalia, arrived and brought an account of the defeat of the army: and the rest of the prediction was soon accomplished; for the corn was dragged out of the granaries, and strewed about all the streets and alleys, and destroyed. You all embarked on board the ships in haste and alarm; and at night, when you looked back towards the town, you beheld the barges on fire, which were burned by the soldiers because they would not follow. At last you were deserted by the fleet of the Rhodians, and then you found that the prophet had been a true one.

I have explained as concisely as possible the forewarnings of dreams and frenzy, with which I said that art had nothing to do; for both these kinds of prediction arise from the same cause, which our friend Cratippus adopts as the true explanation—namely, that the souls of men are partly inspired and agitated from without. By which he meant to say, that there is in the exterior world a sort of divine soul, whence the human soul is derived; and that that portion of the human soul which is the fountain of sensation, motion, and appetite, is not separate from the action of the body; but that portion which partakes of reason and intelligence is then most energetic, when it is most completely abstracted from the body.

Therefore, after having recounted veritable instances of presentiments and dreams, Cratippus used to sum up his conclusions in this manner:—"If," he would say, "the existence of the eyes is necessary to the existence and operation of the function of sight, though the eyes may not be always exercising that function, still he who has once made use of his eyes so as to see correctly, is possessed of eyes capable of the sensation of correct sight: just so if the function and gift of divination cannot exist without the exercise of divination, and yet a man who has this gift may sometimes err in its

exercise, and not foresee correctly ; then it is sufficient to prove the existence of divination, that some event should have been once so correctly divined that none of its circumstances appear to have happened fortuitously. And as a multitude of such events have occurred, the existence of divination ought not to be doubted.

XXXIII. But as to those divinations which are explained by conjecture, or by the observation of events ; these, as I have said before, are not of the natural, but artificial order ; in which artificial class are the haruspices, and augurs, and interpreters. These are discredited by the Peripatetics, and defended by the Stoics. Some of them are established by certain monuments and systems, as is evident from the ritual books of the ancient Etruscans respecting electrical interpretation of the omens conveyed by the entrails of victims and by lightning, and by our own books on the discipline of the augurs. Other divinations are explained at once by conjecture, without reference to any written authorities ; such as the prophecy of Calchas in Homer, who, by a certain number of flying sparrows, predicted the number of years which would be occupied in the siege of Troy ; and as an event which we read recorded in the history of Sylla, which happened under your own eyes. For when Sylla was in the territory of Nola, and was sacrificing in front of his tent, a serpent suddenly glided out from beneath the altar ; and when, upon this, the soothsayer Posthumius exhorted him to give orders for the immediate march of the army, Sylla obeyed the injunction, and entirely defeated the Samnites, who lay before Nola, and took possession of their richly-provided camp.

It was by this kind of conjectural divination that the fortune of the tyrant Dionysius was announced a little before the commencement of his reign ; for when he was travelling through the territory of Leontini, he dismounted and drove his horse into a river ; but the horse was carried away by the current, and Dionysius, not being able with all his efforts to extricate him, departed, as Philistus reports, lamenting his loss. Some time afterwards, as he was journeying further down the river, he suddenly heard a neighing, and to his great joy found his horse in very comfortable condition, with a swarm of bees hanging on his mane. And this prodigy

intimated the event which took place a few days after this, when Dionysius was called to the throne.

XXXIV. Need I say more? How many intimations were given to the Lacedæmonians a short time before the disaster of Leuctra, when arms rattled in the temple of Hercules, and his statue streamed with profuse sweat! At the same time, at Thebes (as Callisthenes relates), the folding-doors in the temple of Hercules, which were closed with bars, opened of their own accord, and the armour which was suspended on the walls was found fallen to the ground. And at the same period, at Lebadia, where divine rites were being performed in honour of Trophonius, all the cocks in the neighbourhood began to crow so incessantly as never to leave off at all; and the Bœotian augurs affirmed that this was a sign of victory to the Thebans, because these birds crow only on occasions of victory, and maintain silence in case of defeat.

Many other signs, at this time, announced to the Spartans the calamities of the battle of Leuctra; for, at Delphi, on the head of the statue of Lysander, who was the most famous of the Lacedæmonians, there suddenly appeared a garland of wild prickly herbs. And the golden stars which the Lacedæmonians had set up as symbols of Castor and Pollux, in the temple of Delphi, after the famous naval victory of Lysander, in which the power of Athens was broken, because those divinities were reported to have appeared in the Lacedæmonian fleet during that engagement, fell down, and were seen no more.

And the greatest of all the prodigies which were sent as warnings to those same Lacedæmonians, happened when they sent to consult the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona on the success of the combat; and when the ambassadors had cast their questions into the urn from which the responses were to be drawn, an ape, whom the king of Molossus kept as a pet, disturbed and confounded all the lots, and everything else which had been prepared for the purpose of giving a reply in due form. Upon which the priestess who presided at the oracular rites, declared that the Lacedæmonians must rather look to their safety than expect a victory.

XXXV. Must I say more? In the second Punic war, when Flaminius, being consul for the second time, despised the signs of future events, did he not by such conduct occasion

great disasters to the state? For when, after having reviewed the troops, he was moving his camp towards Arezzo, and leading his legions against Hannibal, his horse suddenly fell with him before the statue of Jupiter Stator, without any apparent cause. But though those who were skilful in divination declared it was an evident sign from the Gods that he should not engage in battle, he paid no attention to it. Afterwards, when it was proposed to consult the auspices by the consecrated chickens, the augur indicated the propriety of deferring the battle. Flaminius asked him what was to be done the next day, if the chickens still refused to feed? He replied that in that case he must still rest quiet. "Fine auspices, indeed," replied Flaminius, "if we may only fight when the chickens are hungry, but must do nothing if they are full." And so he commanded the standards to be moved forward, and the army to follow him; on which occasion, the standard-bearer of the first battalion could not extricate his standard from the ground in which it was pitched, and several soldiers who endeavoured to assist him were foiled in the attempt. Flaminius, to whom they related this incident, despised the warning, as was usual with him; and in the course of three hours from that time, the whole of his army was routed, and he himself slain.

And it is a wonderful story, too, that is told by Cœlius, as having happened at this very time, that such great earthquakes took place in Liguria, Gallia, and many of the islands, and throughout all Italy, that many cities were destroyed, and the earth was broken into chasms in many places, and rivers rolled backwards, while the waters of the sea rushed into their channels.

XXXVI. Skilful diviners can certainly derive correct presentiments from slight circumstances. When Midas, who became king of Phrygia, was yet an infant, some ants crammed some grains of wheat into his mouth while he was sleeping. On this the diviners predicted that he would become exceedingly rich, as indeed afterwards happened. While Plato was an infant in his cradle, a swarm of bees settled on his lips during his slumbers; and the diviners answered that he would become extremely eloquent; and this prediction of his future eloquence was made before he even knew how to speak.

Why should I speak of your dear and delightful friend, Roscius? Did he tell lies himself, or did the whole city of Lanuvium tell lies for him? When he was in his cradle at Solonium, where he was being brought up,—(a place which belongs to the Lanuvian territory,)—the story goes, that one night, there being a light in the room, his nurse arose and found a serpent coiled around him, and in her alarm at this sight she made a great outcry. The father of Roscius related the circumstance to the soothsayers, and they answered that the child would become preeminently distinguished and illustrious. This adventure was afterwards engraved by Praxiteles in silver, and our friend Archias celebrated it in verse.

What, then, are we waiting for? Are we to wait till the Gods are conversant with us and our affairs, while we are in the forum, and on our journeys, and when we are at home? yet though they do not openly discover themselves to us, they diffuse their divine influence far and wide—an influence which they not only inclose in the caverns of the earth, but sometimes extend to the constitutions of men. For it was this divine influence of the earth which inspired the Pythia at Delphi, while the Sibyl received her power of divination from nature. Why should we wonder at this? Do we not see how various are the species and specific properties of earths?—of which some parts are injurious, as the earth of Ampsanctus in Hirpinum, and the Plutonian land in Asia: and some portions of the soil of the fields are pestilential, others salubrious; some spots produce acute capacities, others heavy characters. All which things depend on the varieties of atmosphere, and are inequalities of the exhalations of the different soils.

It likewise often happens that minds are affected more or less powerfully by certain expressions of countenance, and certain tones of voice and modulations,—often also by fits of anxiety and terror—a condition indicated in these lines of the poet:—

Madden'd in heart, and weeping like as one
By the mysterious rites of Bacchus wrought
Into wild ecstacy, she wanders lone
Amid the tombs, and mourns her Teucer lost.

XXXVII. And this state of excitement also proves that there is a divine energy in human souls. And so Democritus

asserts, that without something of this ecstasy no man can become a great poet; and Plato utters the same sentiment: and he may call this poetic inspiration an ecstasy or madness as much as he pleases, so long as he eulogizes it as eloquently as he does in his *Phædon*.

What is your art of oratory in pleading causes? What is your action? Can it be forcible, commanding, and copious, unless your mind and heart are in some degree animated by a kind of inspiration? I have often beheld in yourself, and, to descend to a less dignified example, even in your friend *Æsop*, such fire and splendour of expression and action, that it seemed as if some potent inspiration had altogether abstracted him from all present sensation and thought.

Besides this, forms often come across us which have no real existence, but which nevertheless have a distinct appearance. Such an apparition is said to have occurred to *Brennus*, and to his Gallic troops, when he was waging an impious war upon the temple of *Apollo* at *Delphi*. For on that occasion it is reported that the *Pythian* priestess pronounced these words:—"I and the white virgins will provide for the future." In accordance with which, it happened that the *Gauls* fancied that they saw white virgins bearing arms against them, and that their entire army was overwhelmed in the snow.

Aristotle thinks that those who become ecstatic or furious through some disease, especially melancholy persons, possess a divine gift of presentiment in their minds.

XXXVIII. But I know not whether it is right to attribute anything of this kind to men with diseases of the stomach, or to persons in a frenzy, for true divination rather appertains to a sound mind than to a sick body.

The *Stoics* attempt to prove the reality of divination in this way:—If there are Gods, and they do not intimate future events to men, they either do not love men, or they are ignorant of the future; or else they conceive that knowledge of the future can be of no service to men; or they conceive that it does not become their majesty to condescend to intimate beforehand what must be hereafter; or lastly, we must say that even the Gods themselves cannot tell how to forewarn us of them.

But it is not true that the Gods do not love men, for they

are essentially benevolent and philanthropic; and they cannot be ignorant of those events which take place by their own direction and appointment. Again, it cannot be a matter of indifference to us to be apprised of what is about to happen, for we shall become more cautious if we do know such things. Nor do they think it beneath their dignity to give such intimations, for nothing is more excellent than beneficence. And lastly, the Gods cannot be ignorant of future events. Therefore there are no Gods, and they do not give intimations of the future. But there are Gods: so therefore they do give such intimations; and if they do give such intimations, they must have given us the means of understanding them, or else they would give their information to no purpose. And if they do give us such means, divination must needs exist; therefore divination does exist.

XXXIX. Such is the argument in favour of divination by which Chrysippus, Diogenes, and Antipater endeavour to demonstrate their side of the question. Why, then, should any doubt be entertained that the arguments that I have advanced are entirely true? If both reason and fact are on my side,—if whole nations and peoples, Greeks and barbarians, and our own ancestors also, confirm all my assertions,—if also it has always been maintained by the greatest philosophers and poets, and by the wisest legislators who have framed constitutions and founded cities, must we wait till the very animals give their verdict? and may not we be content with the unanimous authority of all mankind? Nor indeed is any other argument brought forward to prove that all these kinds of divination which I uphold have no existence, than that it appears difficult to explain what are the different principles and causes of each kind of divination. For what reason can the soothsayer allege why an injury in the lungs of otherwise favourable entrails should compel us to alter a day previously appointed, and defer an enterprise? How can an augur explain why the croak of a raven on the right hand, and a crow on the left, should be reckoned a good omen? What can an astrologer say by way of explaining why a conjunction of the planet Jupiter or Venus with the moon is propitious at the birth of a child, and why the conjunction of Saturn or Mars is injurious? or why God should warn us during sleep, and neglect us when we are awake? or lastly, what is the reason

why the frantic Cassandra could foresee future events, while the sage Priam remained ignorant of them?

Do you ask why everything takes place as it does? Very right; but that is not the question now; what we are trying to find out is whether such is the case or not. As, if I were to assert that the magnet is a kind of stone which attracts and draws iron to itself, but were unable to give the reason why that is the case, would you deny the fact altogether? And you treat the subject of divination in the same way, though we see it, and hear of it, and read of it, and have received it as a tradition from our ancestors. Nor did the world in general ever doubt of it before the introduction of that philosophy which has recently been invented, and even since the appearance of philosophy, no philosopher who was of any authority at all has been of a contrary opinion. I have already quoted in its favour Pythagoras, Democritus, and Socrates. There is no exception but Xenophanes among the ancients. I have likewise added the old Academicians, the Peripatetics, and the Stoics: all supported divination; Epicurus alone was of the opposite opinion. But what can be more shameless than such a man as he, who asserted that there was no gratuitous and disinterested virtue in the world?

XL. But what man is there who is not moved by the testimony and declarations of antiquity? Homer writes that Calchas was a most excellent augur, and that he conducted the fleet of the Greeks to Troy,—more, I imagine, by his knowledge of the auspices than of the country. Amphilochus and Mopsus were kings of the Argives, and also augurs, and built the Greek cities on the coast of Cilicia. And before them lived Amphiaraus and Tiresias, men of no lowly rank or obscure fame, not like those men of whom Ennius says—

They hire out their prophecies for gold :

no; they were renowned and first rate men, who predicted the future by means of the knowledge which they derived from birds and omens; and Homer, speaking of the latter even in the infernal regions, says that he alone was consistently wise, while others were wandering about like shadows. As to Amphiaraus, he was so honoured by the general praise of all Greece, that he was accounted a god, and oracles were established at the spot where he was buried.

Why need I speak of Priam king of Asia? had not he two children possessed of this gift of divination, namely a son named Helenus, and a daughter named Cassandra, who both prophesied, one by means of auspices, the other through an excited state of mind and divine inspiration? of which description likewise were two brothers of the noble family of the Marcii, who are recorded as having lived in the days of our ancestors. Does not Homer inform us, too, that Polyidus the Corinthian predicted the various fates of many persons, and the death of his son when he was going to the siege of Troy? And as a general rule, among the ancients, those who were possessed of authority usually also possessed the knowledge of auguries; for, as they thought wisdom a regal attribute, so also did they esteem divination. And of this our state of Rome is an instance, in which several of our kings were also augurs, and afterwards even private persons, endued with the same sacerdotal office, ruled the commonwealth by the authority of religion.

XLI. And this kind of divination has not been neglected even by barbarous nations; for the Druids in Gaul are diviners, among whom I myself have been acquainted with Divitiacus *Æduus*, your own friend and panegyrist, who pretends to the science of nature which the Greeks call physiology, and who asserts that, partly by auguries and partly by conjecture, he foresees future events. Among the Persians they have augurs and diviners, called magi, who at certain seasons all assemble in a temple for mutual conference and consultation; as your college also used once to do on the nones of the month. And no man can become a king of Persia who is not previously initiated in the doctrine of the magi.

There are even whole families and nations devoted to divination. The entire city of Telmessus in Caria is such. Likewise in Elis, a city of Peloponnesus, there are two families, called Iamidæ and Clutidæ, distinguished for their proficiency in divination. And in Syria the Chaldeans have become famous for their astrological predictions, and the subtlety of their genius. Etruria is especially famous for possessing an intimate acquaintance with omens connected with thunderbolts and things of that kind, and the art of explaining the signification of prodigies and portents. This is the reason why our ancestors, during the flourishing days of the empire,

enacted that six of the children of the principal senators should be sent, one to each of the Etrurian tribes, to be instructed in the divination of the Etrurians, in order that this science of divination, so intimately connected with religion, might not, owing to the poverty of its professors, be cultivated for merely mercenary motives, and falsified by bribery.

The Phrygians, the Pisidians, the Cilicians, and Arabians are accustomed to regulate many of their affairs by the omens which they derive from birds. And the Umbrians do the same, according to report.

XLII. It appears to me that the different characteristics of divination have originated in the nature of the localities themselves in which they have been cultivated. For as the Egyptians and Babylonians, who reside in vast plains, where no mountains obstruct their view of the entire hemisphere, have applied themselves principally to that kind of divination called astrology, the Etrurians, on the other hand, because they, as men more devoted to the rites of religion, were used to sacrifice victims with more zeal and frequency, have especially applied themselves to the examination of the entrails of animals; and as, from the character of their climate and the denseness of their atmosphere, they are accustomed to witness many meteorological phenomena, and because for the same reason many singular prodigies take place among them, arising alike from heaven or from earth, and even from the conceptions or offspring of men or cattle, they have become wonderfully skilful in the interpretation of such curiosities, the force of which, as you often say, is clearly declared by the very names given to them by our ancestors, for because they point out (*ostendunt*), portend, show (*monstrant*), and predict, they are called ostents, portents, monsters, and prodigies.

Again, the Arabians, the Phrygians, and Cilicians, because they rear large herds of cattle, and, both in summer and winter, traverse the plains and mountainous districts, have on that account taken especial notice of the songs and flight of birds. The Pisidians, and in our country the Umbrians, have applied themselves to the same art for the same reason. The whole nation of the Carians, and most especially the Telmessians, who reside in the most productive and fertile plains, in which the exuberance of nature gives birth to many extraordinary

productions, have been very careful in the observation of prodigies.

XLIII. But who can shut his eyes to the fact that in every well constituted state auspices, and other kinds of divination, have been much esteemed? What monarch or what people has ever neglected to make use of them in the transactions of peace, and still more especially in time of war, when the safety or welfare of the commonwealth is implicated in a greater degree? I do not speak merely of our own countrymen,—who have never undertaken any martial enterprise without inspection of the entrails, and who never conduct the affairs of the city without consulting the auspices,—I rather allude to foreign nations. The Athenians, for example, always consulted certain divining priests, (whom they called *μάντεις*,) when they convoked their public assemblies. The Spartans always appointed an augur as the assessor of their king, and also they ordained that an augur should be present at the council of their Elders, which was the name they gave to their public council; and in every important transaction they invariably consulted the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, or that of Jupiter Hammon, or that of Dodona. Lycurgus, who formed the Lacedæmonian commonwealth, desired that his code of laws should receive confirmation from the authority of Apollo at Delphi; and when Lysander sought to change them, the same authority forbade his innovations. Moreover, the Spartan magistrates, not content with a careful superintendence of the state affairs, went occasionally to spend a night in the temple of Pasiphae, which is in the country in the neighbourhood of their city, for the sake of dreaming there, because they considered the oracles received in sleep to be true.

But I return to the divination of the Romans. How often has our senate enjoined the decemvirs to consult the books of the Sibyls! For instance, when two suns had been seen, or when three moons had appeared, and when flames of fire were noticed in the sky; or on that other occasion, when the sun was beheld in the night, when noises were heard in the sky, and the heaven itself seemed to burst open, and strange globes were remarked in it. Again, information was laid before the senate, that a portion of the territory of Privernum had been swallowed up, and that the land had sunk down to

an incredible depth, and that Apulia had been convulsed by terrific earthquakes; which portentous events announced to the Romans terrible wars and disastrous seditions. On all these occasions the diviners and their auspices were in perfect accordance with the prophetic verses of the Sibyl.

Again, when the statue of Apollo at Cuma was covered with a miraculous sweat, and that of Victory was found in the same condition at Capua, and when the hermaphrodite was born,—were not these things significant of horrible disasters? Or again, when the Tiber was discoloured with blood, or when, as has often happened, showers of stones, or sometimes of blood, or of mud, or of milk, have fallen,—when the thunderbolt fell on the Centaur of the Capitol, and struck the gates of Mount Aventine, and slew some of the inhabitants; or again, when it struck the temple of Castor and Pollux at Tusculum, and the temple of Piety at Rome,—did not the soothsayers in reply announce the events which subsequently took place, and were not similar predictions found in the Sibylline volumes?

XLIV. How often has the senate commanded the decemvirs to consult the Sibylline books! In what important affairs, and how often has it not been guided wholly by the answers of the soothsayers! In the Marsic war, not long ago, the temple of Juno the Protectress was restored by the senate, which was excited to this holy act by a dream of Cæcilia, the daughter of Quintus Metellus. But after Sisenna, who mentions this dream, had related the wonderful correspondence of the event with the prediction, he nevertheless (being influenced, I suppose, by some Epicurean) proceeded to argue that dreams should never be trusted: however, he states nothing against the credit of the prodigies which took place, and which he reports, at the beginning of the Marsic war, when the images of the gods were seen to sweat, and blood flowed in the streams, and the heavens opened, and voices were heard from secret places, which foretold the dangers of the combat; and at Lanuvium the sacred bucklers were found to have been gnawed by mice, which appeared to the augurs the worst presage of all.

Shall I add further what we read recorded in our annals, that in the war against the Veientes, when the Alban lake had risen enormously, one of their most distinguished nobles

came over to us and said, that it was predicted in the sacred books concerning the destinies of the Veientes, which they had in their own possession, that their city could never be captured while the lake remained full; and that if, when the lake was opened, its waters were allowed to run into the sea, the Romans would suffer loss,—if, on the contrary, they were so drawn off that they did not reach the sea, then we should have good success? And from this circumstance arose the series of immense labours, subsequently undertaken by our ancestors in conducting away the waters of the Alban lake. But when the Veientes, being weary of war, sent ambassadors to the Roman senate, one of them exclaimed that that deserter had not ventured to tell them all he knew, for that in those same sacred books it was predicted that Rome should soon be ravaged by the Gauls,—an event which happened six years after the city of Veii surrendered.

XLV. The cry of the fauns, too, has often been heard in battle; and prophetic voices have often sounded from secret places in periods of trouble; of which, among others, we have two notable examples,—for shortly before the capture of Rome a voice was heard which proceeded from the grove of Vesta, which skirts the new road at the foot of the Palatine Hill, exhorting the citizens to repair the walls and gates, for that if they were not taken care of the city would be taken. The injunction was neglected till it was too late, and it afterwards was awfully confirmed by the fact. After the disaster had occurred, our citizens erected an altar to Aius the Speaker, which we may still see carefully fenced round, opposite the spot where the warning was uttered. Many authors have reported that once, after a great earthquake had happened, they heard a voice from the temple of Juno, commanding that expiation should be made by the sacrifice of a pregnant sow, and hence it was afterwards called the temple of Juno the Admonitress. Shall we then despise these oracular intimations, which the Gods themselves vouchsafed us, and which our ancestors have confirmed by their testimony?

The Pythagoreans had not only high reverence for the voice of the Gods, but they likewise respected the warnings of men (*hominum*), which they call *omina*. And our ancestors were persuaded that much virtue resides in certain words, and therefore prefaced their various enterprises with certain

auspicious phrases, such as, "May good and prosperous and happy fortune attend." They commenced all the public ceremonies of religion with these words,—“Keep silence;” and when they announced any holidays, they commanded that all lawsuits and quarrels should be suspended. Likewise, when the chief who forms a colony makes a lustration and review of it, or when a general musters an army, or a censor the people, they always choose those who have lucky names to prepare the sacrifices. The consuls in their military enrolments likewise take care that the first soldier enrolled shall be one with a fortunate name; and you know that you yourself were very attentive to these ceremonial observances when you were consul and imperator. Our ancestors have likewise enjoined that the name of the tribe which had the precedence should be regarded as the presage of a legitimate assembly of the Comitia.

XLVI. And of presages of this kind I can relate to you several celebrated examples. Under the second consulship of Lucius Paulus, when the charge of making war against the king Perses had been allotted to him, it happened that on the evening of that very same day, when he returned home and kissed his little daughter Tertia, he noticed that she was very sorrowful. “What is the matter, my Tertia,” said he, “why are you so sad?” “My father,” replied she, “Perses has perished.” Upon which he caught her in his arms, and caressing her, exclaimed, “I embrace the omen, my daughter.” But the real truth was, that her dog, who happened to be called Perses, had died.

I have heard Lucius Flaccus, a priest of Mars, say, that Cæcilia, the daughter of Metellus, intending to make a matrimonial engagement for her sister’s daughter, went to a certain temple, in order to procure an omen, according to the ancient custom. Here the maiden stood, and Cæcilia sat for a long time without hearing any sound, till the girl, who grew tired of standing, begged her aunt to allow her to occupy her seat for a short period, in order to rest herself. Cæcilia replied, “Yes, my child, I willingly resign my seat to you.” And this reply of hers was an omen, confirmed by the event, for Cæcilia died soon after, and her niece married her aunt’s husband. I know that men may despise such stories, or even laugh at them, but such conduct amounts to a disbelief in the

existence of the Gods themselves, and to a contempt of their revealed will.

XLVII. Why need I speak of the augurs?—that part of the question concerns you. The defence of the auguries, I say, belongs peculiarly to you. When you were a consul, Publius Claudius, who was one of the augurs, announced to you, when the augury of the Goddess Salus was doubted, that a disastrous domestic and civil war would take place, which happened a few months afterwards, but was suppressed by your exertions in still fewer days. And I highly approve of this augur, who alone for a long period remained constant to the study of divination, without making a parade of his auguries, while his colleagues and yours persisted in laughing at him, sometimes terming him an augur of Pisidia or Sora by way of ridicule.

Those who assert that neither auguries nor auspices can give us any insight into or foreknowledge of the future, say that they are mere superstitious practices, wisely invented to impose on the ignorant; which, however, is far from being the case: for our pastoral ancestors under Romulus were not, nor indeed was Romulus himself, so crafty and cunning as to invent religious impositions for the purpose of deceiving the multitude. But the difficulty of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the auspices renders many who are indifferent to them eloquent in their disparagement, for they would rather deny that there is anything in the auspices than take the pains of studying what there really is. What can be more divine than that prediction, which you cite in your poem of Marius, that I may quote your own authority in favour of my argument?—

Jove's eagle, wounded by a serpent's bite,
In his strong talons caught the writhing snake,
And with his goring beak tortured his foe
And slaked his vengeance in his blood. At last
He let the venomous reptile from on high
Fall in the whelming flood, then wing'd his flight
To the far east. Marius beheld, and mark'd
The augury divine, and inly smiled
To view the presage of his coming fame;
Meanwhile the thunder sounded on the left,
And thus confirm'd the omen.

XLVIII. Moreover, the augurial system of Romulus was

a pastoral rather than a civic institution. Nor was it framed to suit the opinions of the ignorant, but derived from men of approved skill, and so handed down to posterity by tradition. Therefore Romulus was himself an augur as well as his brother Remus, if we may trust the authority of Ennius,—

Both wish'd to reign, and both agreed to abide
 The fair decision of the augury
 Here Remus sat alone, and watch'd for signs
 Of fav'ring omen, while fair Romulus
 On the Aventine summit raised his eyes
 To see what lofty flying birds should pass.
 A goodly contest which should rule, and which
 With his own name should stamp the future city.
 Now like spectators in the circus, till
 The consul's signal looses from the goal
 The eager chariots, so the obedient crowd
 Awaited the strife's victor and their king.
 The golden sun departed into night,
 And the pale moon shone with reflected ray,
 When on the left a joyful bird appear'd,
 And golden Sol brought back the radiant day.
 Twelve holy forms of Jove-directed birds
 Wing'd their propitious flight. Great Romulus
 The omen hail'd, for now to him was given
 The power to found and name th' eternal city.

XLIX. Now, however, let us return to the original point from which we have been digressing. Though I cannot give you a reason for all these separate facts, and can only distinctly assert that those things which I have spoken of did really happen, yet have I not sufficiently answered Epicurus and Carneades by proving the facts themselves? Why may I not admit, that though it may be easy to find principles on which to explain artificial presages, the subject of divine intimations is more obscure? for the presages which we deduce from an examination of a victim's entrails, from thunder and lightning, from prodigies, and from the stars, are founded on the accurate observation of many centuries. Now it is certain, that a long course of careful observation, thus carefully conducted for a series of ages, usually brings with it an incredible accuracy of knowledge; and this can exist even without the inspiration of the Gods, when it has been once ascertained by constant observation what follows after each omen, and what is indicated by each prodigy.

The other kind of divination is natural, as I have said

before, and may by physical subtlety of reasoning appear referable to the nature of the Gods, from which, as the wisest men acknowledge, we derive and enjoy the energies of our souls; and as everything is filled and pervaded by a divine intelligence and eternal sense, it follows of necessity that the soul of man must be influenced by its kindred with the soul of the Deity. But when we are not asleep, our faculties are employed on the necessary affairs of life, and so are hindered from communication with the Deity by the bondage of the body.

There are, however, a small number of persons, who, as it were, detach their souls from the body, and addict themselves, with the utmost anxiety and diligence, to the study of the nature of the Gods. The presentiments of men like these are derived not from divine inspiration, but from human reason; for from a contemplation of nature, they anticipate things to come,—as deluges of water, and the future deflagration, at some time or other, of heaven and earth.

There are others who, being concerned in the government of states, as we have heard of the Athenian Solon, foresee the rise of new tyrannies. Such we usually term prudent men; like Thales the Milesian, who, wishing to convict his slanderers, and to show that even a philosopher could make money, if he should be so inclined, bought up all the olive-trees in Miletus before they were in flower; for he had probably, by some knowledge of his own, calculated that there would be a heavy crop of olives. And Thales is said to have been the first man by whom an eclipse of the sun was ever predicted, which happened under the reign of Astyages.

L. Physicians, pilots, and husbandmen have likewise presentiments of many events: but I do not choose to call this divination; as neither do I call that warning which was given by the natural philosopher Anaximander to the Lacedæmonians, when he forewarned them to quit their city and their homes, and to spend the whole night in arms on the plain, because he foresaw the approach of a great earthquake, which took place that very night, and demolished the whole town; and even the lower part of Mount Taygetus was torn away from the rest, like the stern of a ship might be. In the same way, it is not so much as a diviner, as a natural philosopher that we should esteem Pherecydes, the master of Pythagoras

who, when he beheld the water exhausted in a running spring, predicted that an earthquake was nigh at hand.

The mind of man, however, never exerts the power of natural divination, unless when it is so free and disengaged as to be wholly disentangled from the body, as happens in the case of prophets and sleepers.

Therefore, as I have said before, Dicaearchus and our friend Cratippus approve of these two sorts of divination, as long as it is understood that, inasmuch as they proceed from nature, though they may be the highest, they are not the only kind. But if they deny that there is any force in observation, then by such denial they exclude many things which are connected with the common experience and institutions of mankind. However, since they grant us some, and those not insignificant things, namely, prophecies and dreams, there is no reason why we should consider these as very formidable antagonists, especially when there are some who deny the existence of divination altogether.

Those, therefore, whose minds, as it were, despising their bodies, fly forth, and wander freely through the universe, being inspired and influenced by a certain divine ardour, doubtless perceive those things which those who prophecy predict. And spirits like these are excited by many influences that have no connexion with the body, as those which are excited by certain intonations of voice, and by Phrygian melodies, or by the silence of groves and forests, or the murmur of torrents, or the roar of the sea. Such are the minds which are susceptible of ecstasies, and which long beforehand foresee the events of futurity; to which the following lines refer:—

Ah, see you not the vengeance apt to come,
Because a mortal has presumed to judge
Between three rival goddesses?—he's doom'd
To fall a victim to the Spartan dame,
More dreadful than all furies.

Many things have in the same way been predicted by prophets, and not only in ordinary language, but also

In verses which the fauns of olden times
And white-hair'd prophets chanted.

It was thus that the diviners; Marcius and Publicius, are said to have sung their predictions. The mysterious responses of Apollo were of the same nature. I believe also that there were certain exhalations of certain earths, by which gifted

minds were inspired to utter oracles. These, then, are the views which we must entertain of prophets.

LI. Divinations by dreams are of a similar order, because presentiments which happen to diviners when awake, happen to ourselves during sleep. For in sleep the soul is vigorous, and free from the senses, and the obstruction of the cares of the body, which lies prostrate and deathlike; and, since the soul has lived from all eternity, and is engaged with spirits innumerable, it therefore beholds all things in the universe, if it only preserves a watchful attitude, unencumbered by excess of food or drinking, so that the mind is awake during the slumber of the body,—this is the divination of dreamers.

Here, then, comes in an important, and far from natural, but a very artificial interpretation of dreams by Antiphon: and he interprets oracles and prophecies in the same way; for there are explainers of these things just as grammarians are expounders of poets. For, as it would have been in vain for nature to have produced gold, silver, iron, and copper, if she had not taught us the means of extracting them from her bosom for our use and benefit; and as it would have been in vain for her to have bestowed seeds and fruits upon men, if she had not taught them to distinguish and cultivate them,—for what use would any materials whatsoever be to us, if we had no means of working them up?—thus with every useful thing which the Gods have bestowed on us, they have vouchsafed us the sagacity by which its utility may be appreciated; and so, because in dreams, oracles, and prophecies there are many things necessarily obscure and ambiguous, some have received the gift of interpretation of them.

But by what means prophets and sleepers behold those things, which do not at the time exist in sensible reality, is a great question. But when we have once cleared up those points which ought to be investigated first, then the other subjects of our examination will be easier. For the discussion about the Nature of the Gods, which you have so clearly explained in your second book on that subject, embraces the whole question; for if we grant that there are Gods, and that their providence governs the universe, and that they consult for the best management of all human affairs, and that not only in general, but in particular,—if we grant this, which indeed appears to me to be undeniable, then we must hold it

as a necessary consequence that these Gods have bestowed on men the signs and indications of futurity.

The mode, however, by which the Gods endue us with the gift and power of divination requires some notice.

LII. The Stoics will not allow that the Deity can be interested in each cleft in entrails, or in the chirping of birds. They affirm that such interference is altogether indecorous—unworthy of the majesty of the Gods, and an incredible impossibility. They maintain that from the beginning of the world it has been ordained that certain signs must needs precede certain events, some of which are drawn from the entrails of animals, some from the note and flight of birds, some from the sight of lightning, some from prodigies, some from stars, some from visions of dreamers, and some from exclamations of men in frenzy: and those who have a clear perception of these things are not often deceived. Bad conjectures and incorrect interpretations are false, not because of any imposture in the signs themselves, but because of the ignorance of their expounders.

It being, therefore, granted and conceded that there exists a certain divine energy, by which human life is supported and surrounded, it is not hard to conceive how all that happens to men may happen by the direction of heaven; for this divine and sentient energy, which expands throughout the universe, may select a victim for sacrifice, and may, by exterior agency, effect any change in the condition of its entrails at the period of its immolation: so that any given characteristic may be found excessive or defective in the animal's body. For by very trifling exertions nature can alter, or new-model, or diminish many things. And the prodigies which happened a little before Cæsar's death are of great weight in preventing us from doubting this,—when on that very day on which he first sat on the golden throne and went forth clad in a purple robe, when he was sacrificing, no heart was found in the intestines of the fat ox. Do you then suppose that any warm-blooded animal, unless by divine interference, can live an instant without a heart? He was himself surprised at the novelty of the phenomenon; on which Spurinna observed that he had reason to fear that he would lose both sense and life, since both of these proceed from the heart. The next day the liver of the victim was

found defective in the upper extremity. Doubtless the immortal Gods vouchsafed Cæsar these signs to apprize him of his approaching death, though not to enable him to guard against it.

When, therefore, we cannot discover in the entrails of the victim those organs without which the animal cannot live, we must necessarily suppose that they have been annihilated by a superintending Providence at the very instant that the sacrifice is offered.

LIII. And the same divine influence may likewise be the cause why birds fly in different directions on different occasions, why they hide themselves sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, and why they sing on the right hand or on the left. For if every animal according to its own will can direct the motions of its body, so as to stoop, to look on one side, or to look up, and can bend, twist, contract, or extend its limbs as it pleases, and does those things almost before thinking of doing them, how much more easy is it for a God to do so, whose deity governs and regulates all things.

It is the Deity, too, which presents various signs to us, many of which history has recorded for us; as for instance, we find it stated that if the moon was eclipsed a little before sunrise in the sign of Leo, it was a sign that Darius should be slain and the Persians be defeated by Alexander and the Macedonians. And if a girl was born with two heads, it was a sign that there was to be a sedition among the people and corruption and adultery at home. If a woman should dream that she was delivered of a lion, the country in which such an occurrence took place would soon be subjected to foreign domination. Of the same kind is the fact mentioned by Herodotus, that the son of Cræsus spoke, though the gift of speech was by nature denied him; which prodigy was an indication that his father's kingdom and family would be utterly destroyed. And all our histories relate that the head of Servius Tullius while sleeping appeared to be on fire, which was a sign of the extraordinary events which followed.

As, therefore, a man who falls asleep while his mind is full of pure meditations, and all circumstances around him adapted to tranquillity, will experience in his dreams true and certain presentiments; so also the chaste and pure

mind of a waking man is better suited to the observation of the course of the stars, or the flight of birds, and the intimations of the truth to be collected from entrails.

LIV. And connected with this principle is the tradition which we have received concerning Socrates, which is often affirmed by himself in the books of his disciples—that he possessed a certain divinity, which he called a demon, and to which he was always obedient,—a genius which never compelled him to action, but often deterred him from it. The same Socrates (and where can we find a better authority?) being consulted by Xenophon, whether he should follow Cyrus to the wars, gave him his counsel, and then added these words,—“The advice I give you is merely human : in such obscure and uncertain cases, it is best to consult the oracle of Apollo, to whom the Athenians have always publicly appealed in questions of importance.”

It is likewise written of Socrates, that having once seen his friend Crito with his eye bandaged, and having asked him what was the matter with it, he received for answer, that as he was walking in the fields, a branch of a tree he had attempted to bend sprang back, and hit him in the eye. Upon this, Socrates replied, “This is the consequence of your not having obeyed me when I recalled you, following the divine presentiment, according to my custom.”

Another remarkable story is told of Socrates. After the battle in which the Athenians were defeated at Delium, under the command of Laches, he was obliged to fly with that unfortunate general. At length reaching a spot where three ways met, he refused to pursue the same track as the rest. When they inquired the cause of his behaviour, he said that he was restrained by a God. The others, who left Socrates, fell in with the enemy's cavalry.

Antipater has collected many other instances of the admirable divination of Socrates, which I omit, for they are quite familiar to you, and I need not further enumerate them. I cannot, however, avoid mentioning one fact in the history of this philosopher, which strikes me as magnificent, and almost divine ;—namely, that when he had been condemned by the sentence of impious men, he said, he was prepared to die with the most perfect equanimity ; because the God within him had not suffered him to be afflicted with any idea of

impending evil, either when he left his home, or when he appeared before the court.

LV. I think, therefore, that true divination exists, although those men are often deceived who appear to proceed on conjecture, or on artificial rules. For men are fallible in all arts, and we cannot suppose they are infallible here. It may happen that some sign, which has an ambiguous signification, is received in a certain one. It may happen that some particular has escaped the notice of the inquirer, or is purposely concealed by him, because opposed to his interest.

I should, however, consider my plea for divination sufficiently established, if only a few well-authenticated cases of presentiment and prophecies could be discovered ; whereas, in truth, there are many. I will even declare without hesitation, that a single instance of presage and prediction, all the points of which are borne out by subsequent events—and that definitely and regularly, not casually and fortuitously—would suffice to compel an admission of the reality of divination from all reasonable minds.

It appears to me, moreover, that we should refer all the virtue and power of divination to the Divinity, as Posidonius has done, as before observed ; in the next place to Fate, and afterwards to the nature of things. For reason compels us to admit that by Fate all things take place. By Fate I mean that which the Greeks call *εἰμαρμένη*, that is, a certain order and series of causes—for cause linked to cause produces all things : and in this connexion of cause consists the constant truth which flows through all eternity. From whence it follows that nothing happens which is not predestined to happen ; and in the same way nothing is predestined to happen, the nature of which does not contain the efficient causes of its happening.

From which it must be understood that fate is not a mere superstitious imagination, but is what is called, in the language of natural philosophy, the eternal cause of things ; the cause why past things have happened, why present things do happen, and why future things will happen. And thus we are taught by exact observation, what consequences are usually produced, by what causes, though not invariably. And thus the causes of future events may truly be discerned by those who behold them in states of ecstasy or quiet.

LVI. Since, then, all things happen by a certain fate, (as will be shown in another place,) if any man could exist who could comprehend this succession of causes in his intellectual view, such a man would be infallible. For being in possession of a knowledge of the causes of all events, he would necessarily foresee how and when all events would take place.

But as no being except the Deity alone can do this, man can attain no more than a kind of presentiment of futurity, by observing the events which are the usual consequences of certain signs. For those events that are to happen in future do not start into existence on a sudden. But the regular course of time resembles the untwisting of a cable, producing nothing absolutely new, but all things in a grand concatenation or series of repetitions.

And this has been observed by those who possess the gift of natural divination, and by those who study the regular successions of certain things. For though they do not always apprehend the causes, yet they clearly discern the signs and marks of the causes. And by diligently investigating and committing to memory all such signs, and the traditions of our ancestors concerning them, they produce an elaborate system of that divination which is termed technical respecting the entrails of victims, thunder and lightning, prodigies, and celestial phenomena.

We must not, therefore, be astonished that those who addict themselves to divination foresee many events which have no place of existence. For all things do even now exist, though they are removed in point of time. And as the vital embryo of all vegetation exists in seeds, from which they afterwards germinate, so are all things even now hidden in their causes, and perceived as hereafter to happen by the mind when it is thrown into an ecstasy, or relaxed in sleep, and cool reason and calculation is often granted a presentiment of them. And as the astrologers who watch the risings, settings, and various courses of the sun, moon, and other stars, can predict long before all their revolutions and phenomena ; so those who have noted the series and consequence of events, with constant and indefatigable attention, during a very long period, do generally, or (if that is too difficult) at least occasionally, foresee with certainty the things that are to come to pass.

Such are some of the arguments derived from the nature of fate, by which the reality of divination may be proved.

LVII. Another powerful plea in favour of divination, may be drawn from Nature herself, which teaches us how great is the energy of the mind when abstracted from the bodily senses, as it is most especially in ecstasy and sleep. For even as the Gods know what passes in our minds without the aid of eyes, ears or tongues, (on which divine omniscience is founded the feeling of men, that when they wish in silence for, or offer up a prayer for anything, the Gods hear them,) so when the soul of man is disengaged from corporeal impediments, and set at freedom, either from being relaxed in sleep, or in a state of mental excitement, it beholds those wonders which, when entangled beneath the veil of the flesh, it is unable to see.

It may be difficult, perhaps, to connect this principle of nature with that kind of divination which we have stated to result from study and art. Posidonius, however, thinks that there are in nature certain signs and symbols of future events. We are informed that the inhabitants of Cea, according to the report of Heraclides of Pontus, are accustomed carefully to observe the circumstances attending the rising of the Dog Star, in order to know the character of the ensuing season, and how far it will prove salubrious or pestilential. For if the star rose with an obscure and dim appearance, it proved that the atmosphere was gross and foggy, and its respiration would be heavy and unwholesome. But if it appeared bright and lucid, then that was a sign that the air was light and pure, and therefore healthful.

Democritus believed that the ancients had wisely enjoined the inspection of the entrails of animals which had been sacrificed, because by their condition and colour it is possible to determine the salubrity or pestilential state of the atmosphere, and sometimes even what is likely to be the fertility or sterility of the earth. And if careful observation and practice recognise these rules as proceeding from nature, then every day might bring us many examples which might deserve notice and remark; so that the natural philosopher whom Pacuvius introduces in his Chryses, seems to me very ignorant of the nature of things, when he says,—

All those who understand the speech of birds
And hearts of victims better than their own,
May be just listen'd to, but not obey'd.

Why should he make such a remark here, when a little after he speaks thus plainly in a contrary sense?—

Whatever God may be, 'tis he who forms,
Preserves and nurtures all. Unto himself
He back absorbs all beings,—evermore
The universal Sire,—at once the source
And end of nature.

Why, then, since the universe is the sole and common home of all creatures, and since the minds of men always have existed, and will exist, why, I say, should they not be able to perceive the consequences, and what is the result indicated by each sign, and what events each sign foreshows?

These are the arguments which I had to bring forward on the subject of divination. For the rest, I in nowise believe in those who predict by lots, or those who tell fortunes for the sake of gain, nor those necromancers who evoke the manes, whom your friend Appius consulted.

Of little service are the Morsian prophet,
The Haruspi of the village, the astrologer
Of the throng'd circus, or the priest of Isis,
Or the imposturous interpreter
Of dreams. All these are but false conjurors,
Who have no skill to read futurity,
They are but hypocrites, urged on by hunger;
Ignorant of themselves, they would teach others,
To whom they promise boundless wealth, and beg
A penny in return, paid in advance.

Such is the style in which Ennius speaks of those pretenders of divination; and a few verses before, he has affirmed that though the Gods exist, they take no care of the human race. I am of a contrary opinion, and approve of divination, because I believe that the Gods do watch over men, and admonish them, and presignify many things to them, all levity, vanity, and malice being excluded.

And when Quintus had said this, You are, indeed, said I, admirably prepared.

[*The rest of this Book is lost.*]

BOOK II.



I. WHEN I have been considering, as I frequently have, with deep and prolonged cogitation, by what means I might serve as many persons as possible, so as never to cease from doing service to my country, no better method has occurred to me than that of instructing my fellow-citizens in the noblest arts. And this I flatter myself that I have already in some degree effected in the numerous works which I have written. In the treatise which I have entitled "*Hortensius*," I have earnestly recommended them to the study of philosophy; and in the four books of *Academic Questions*, I have laid open that species of philosophy which I think the least arrogant, and at the same time the most consistent and elegant.

Again, as the foundation of all philosophy is the knowledge of the chief good and evil which we should seek or shun, I have thoroughly discussed these topics in five books, in order to explain the different arguments and objections of the various schools in relation thereto.¹ In five other books of *Tusculan Questions*, I have explained what most conduces to render life happy. In the first, I treat of the contempt of death; in the second, of the endurance of pain and sorrow; in the third, of mitigating melancholy; in the fourth, of the other perturbations of the mind; and in the fifth, I elaborate that most glorious of all philosophic doctrines—the all-sufficiency of virtue; and prove that virtue can secure our perpetual bliss without foreign appliances and assistances.

When these works were completed, I wrote three books on the *Nature of the Gods*. I have discussed all the different bearings and topics of that subject, and now I proceed in the composition of a treatise on *Divination*, in order to give

¹ He is here referring to the treatise *De Finibus*.

that subject the amplest development. And if, when this is finished, I add another on Fate, I shall have abundantly examined the whole of that question.

To this catalogue of my writings, I must likewise add my six books on the Republic, which I composed when I was directing the government of the State. A grand subject, indeed, and peculiarly connected with philosophy, and one which has been richly elaborated by Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and the whole tribe of the Peripatetics.

I must not forget to mention my Essay on Consolation, which afforded me myself no inconsiderable comfort, and will, I trust, be of some benefit to others. Besides this, I lately wrote a work on Old Age, which I addressed to Atticus; and since it is owing to philosophy that our friend Cato is the good and brave man that he is, he is well entitled to an honourable place in the list of my writings.

Moreover, as Aristotle and Theophrastus, two authors eminently distinguished both for the penetration and fertility of their genius, have united with their philosophy precepts likewise for eloquence, so I think that I too may class among my philosophical writings my treatise on the Oratorical Art. So there are three books on Oratory, a fourth Essay entitled Brutus, and a fifth named the Orator.

II. Such are the works I have already written, and I am girding myself up to what remains, with the desire (if I am not hindered by weightier business) of leaving no philosophical topic otherwise than fully explained and illustrated in the Latin language. For what greater or better service can we render to our country, than by thus educating and instructing the rising generation, especially in times like these, and in the present state of morality, when society has fallen into such disorders as to require every one to use his best exertions to check and restrain it?

Not that I expect to succeed (for that, indeed, cannot be even hoped) in winning all the young to the study of philosophy. I shall be glad to gain even a few, the fruits of whose industry may have an extended effect on the republic.

Indeed, I already begin to gather some fruit of my labour, from those of more advanced years, who are pleased with my various books. By their eagerness for reading what I write, my ambition for writing is from day to day more vehe-

mently excited. And indeed such individuals are far more numerous than I could have imagined. A magnificent thing it will be, and glorious indeed for the Romans, when they shall no longer find it necessary to resort to the Greeks for philosophical literature. And this desideratum I shall certainly effect for them, if I do but succeed in accomplishing my design.

To the undertaking of explaining philosophy I was originally prompted by disastrous circumstances of the state. For during the civil wars I could not defend the commonwealth by professional exertions; while at the same time I could not remain inactive. And yet I could not find anything worthy of myself for me to undertake. My fellow-citizens, therefore, will pardon me, or rather will thank me; because when Rome had become the property of one man, I neither concealed myself, nor deserted them, nor yielded to grief, nor conducted myself like a politician indignant at either an individual or the times,—nor played the part of a flatterer of, or courtier to, the power of another, so as to be ashamed of myself. For from Plato and philosophy I had learnt this lesson, that certain revolutions are natural to all republics, which alternately come under the power of monarchs, and democracies, and aristocracies.

And when this fate had befallen our own Commonwealth, then, being deprived of my customary employments, I applied myself anew to the study of philosophy, doing so both to alleviate my own sorrow for the calamities of the state, and also in the hope of serving my fellow-countrymen by my writings. And thus in my books I continued to plead and to harangue, and took the same care to advance the interests of philosophy as I had before to promote the cause of the Republic. Now, however, since I am again engaged in the affairs of government, I must devote my attention to the state, or I should rather say, all my labours and cares must be occupied about that; and I shall only be able to give to philosophy whatever little leisure I can steal from public business and public employments. Of these matters, however, I shall find a better occasion to speak; let me now return to the subject of divination. For when my brother Quintus had concluded his arguments on the subject of divination, contained in the preceding book, and we had walked enough to

satisfy us, we sat down in my library, which, as I before noticed, is in my Lyceum.

III. Then I said,—Quintus, you have defended the doctrine of the Stoics, respecting divination, with great accuracy, and on the strictest Stoical principles. And what particularly pleased me was, that you supported your cause chiefly by authorities, and those, too, of great force and dignity, borrowed from our own countrymen. It is now my part to notice what you have advanced. But I shall do so without offering anything absolutely on one side or the other, examining all your arguments, often expressing doubts and distrusting myself. For if I assumed anything I could say on this subject as certain, I should play the part of a diviner even while denying divination.

I am, no doubt, greatly influenced by that preliminary question which Carneades used to raise,—namely, What is the subject matter of divination? Is it things perceived by the senses, or not? Such things we see, or hear, or taste, or smell, or touch. Is there, then, among such, anything which we perceive more by some foreseeing power, or agitation of the mind, than through nature herself? Or could a diviner, if he were blind as Tiresias, somehow or other distinguish between white and black? or if he were deaf, could he distinguish between the articulations and modulations of voices? Divination, therefore, cannot be applied to those objects which come under the cognisance of the senses.

Nor is it of much use, even in matters of art and science. In medicine for instance, if a person is sick we do not call in the diviner or the conjuror, but the physician; and in music, if we wish to learn the flute or the harp, we do not take lessons from the soothsayer, but from the musician.

It is the same in literature, and in all those sciences which are matters of education and discipline. Do you think that those who addict themselves to the art of divination can thereby inform us whether the sun is larger than the earth or of the same size as it appears, or whether the moon shines by her own light or by a radiance borrowed from the sun, or what are the laws of motion obeyed by these orbs, or by those other five stars which are termed the planets?

None of those who pass for diviners pretend to be able to instruct mankind in these matters, nor can they prove the

truth or falsehood of the problems of geometry. Such matters belong to the mathematician, not to conjurors.

IV. And in those questions which are agitated in moral philosophy, is there any one with respect to which any diviner ever gives an answer, or is ever consulted as to what is good, bad, or indifferent? For such topics properly belong to philosophers. As to duties, who ever consulted a diviner how to regulate his behaviour to his parents, his brethren, or his friends? or in what light he should regard wealth, and honour, and authority? These things are referred to sages, not diviners.

Again, as to the subjects which belong to dialecticians, or natural philosophers. What diviner can tell whether there is one world or more than one? what are the principles of things from which all things derive their being? That is the science of the natural philosopher. Or who asks a diviner how to solve the difficulty of a fallacy, or disentangle the perplexity of a *sorites*, which we may render by the Latin word *acervalem* (an accumulation), though it is unnecessary; for just as the word philosophy, and many other Grecian terms, have become naturalized in our language, so this word *sorites* is already sufficiently familiar among us. These subjects belong to the logician, not to the diviner.

Again, if the question be, which is the best form of government, what are the relative advantages or disadvantages of such and such laws and moral regulations, should we dream of advising with a soothsayer from Etruria, or with princes and chosen men experienced in political matters?

Now, if divination regards neither those things which are perceived by the senses, nor those which are taught by art, nor those which are discussed by philosophy, nor those which affect the politics of the state, I scarcely understand what can be its object. It must either bear upon all topics, or else some particular one must be allotted to it in which it may be exercised. Now common sense certifies us that it does not bear on all topics, and we are at a loss to discover what particular topic, or subject matter, it can embrace. It follows, therefore, that divination does not exist.

V. There is a common Greek proverb to this effect:—

The wisest prophet's he who guesses best.

Will, then, a soothsayer conjecture what sort of weather is

coming better than a pilot? or will he divine the character of an illness more acutely than a doctor? or the proper way to carry on a war better than a general?

But I observe, O Quintus, that you have prudently distinguished the topics of divination from those matters which lie within the sphere of art and skill, and from those which are perceived by the observation of the senses, or by any system. You have defined it thus:—Divination is the presentiment and power of foretelling or predicting those things which are fortuitous. But, in the first place, you are only arguing in a circle. For does not a pilot, or a physician, or a general foresee the probabilities of things fortuitous as well as your diviner? Can, then, any augur whatsoever, or soothsayer, or diviner, conjecture better whether a patient will escape from sickness, or a ship from peril, or the army from the manœuvres of the enemy, than a physician, or pilot, or general?

But you said that these matters did not belong to the diviner; but that men could foresee impending winds or showers by certain signs; and to confirm this argument, you have cited certain verses of my translation of Aratus. And yet these atmospheric phenomena are fortuitous; for they only happen occasionally, and not always. What, then, is this presentiment of things fortuitous, which you call divination, and to what can it be applied? For those things of which we can have a previous notion by some art or reason, you speak of as belonging not to diviners, but to men of skill in them. Thus you have left divination nothing but the power of predicting those fortuitous things which cannot be foreseen by any art or any prudence.

If, for example, any one had, many years before, predicted that Marcus Marcellus, who was thrice consul, was to perish by a shipwreck, he would, doubtless, have been a true diviner, because such a fact could not have been foreseen by any other means than that of divination. Divination, therefore, is a foreknowledge of events which depend on fortune.

VI. But can there be a just presentiment of those things which do not admit of any rational conjecture to explain why they will happen? For what do we mean when we say a thing happens by chance, or fortune, or hazard, or accident, but that something has happened or taken place which might

never have happened or taken place at all, or which might have happened or taken place in a different manner? Now how can that be fairly foreseen or predicted which thus takes place by chance, and the mere caprice of fortune?

It is by reason that the physician foresees that a malady will increase, a pilot that a tempest will descend, and a general that the enemy will make certain diversions. And yet these men, who have generally good reasons on which their opinions respecting relative probabilities are founded, are themselves often deceived. As when the husbandman sees his olive-trees in blossom, he ventures to expect that they will also bear fruit; nevertheless, he is sometimes mistaken.

Now, if those who never assert anything but from some probable conjecture founded on reason, are often mistaken, what are we to think of the conjectures of those men who derive their presages of futurity from the entrails of victims, or birds, or prodigies, or oracles, or dreams. I have not as yet come to show how utterly null and vain such signs are, as the cleft of a liver, the note of a crow, the flight of an eagle, the shooting of a star, the voices of people in frenzy, lots and dreams, of each of which I shall speak in its turn; at present I dwell only on the general argument. How can it be foreseen that anything will happen which has neither any assignable cause, or mark, to show why it will happen?

The eclipses of the sun and moon are predicted for a series of many years before they happen, by those who make regular calculations of the courses and motions of the stars. They only foretell that which the invariable order of nature will necessarily bring about. For they perceive that in the un-deviating course of the moon's motions, she will arrive at a given period at a point opposite the sun, and become so exactly under the shadow of the earth, which is the boundary of night, that she must be eclipsed. They likewise know, that when the same moon comes between the earth and the sun, the latter must appear eclipsed to the eyes of men. They know in what sign each of the wandering stars will be at a future period, and when each sign will rise and set on any specific day. So that you know on what principles those men proceed who predict these things.

VII. But what rational rule can guide those men who

predict the discovery of a treasure, or the accession to an estate? And by what series of cause and effect are the approach of events of this kind indicated? If these events, and others of the same kind, happen by any kind of necessity, then what is there that we can suppose to be brought about by chance or fortune? For nothing is so opposite to regularity and reason as this same fortune; so that it seems to me that God himself cannot foreknow absolutely those things which are to happen by chance and fortune. For if he knows it, then it will certainly happen; and if it will certainly happen, there is no chance in the matter. But there is chance; therefore there is no such thing as a presentiment of the future.

If, however, you maintain that there is no such thing as fortune, and that all things which happen, and which are about to happen, are determined by fate from all eternity, then you must change your definition of divination, which you have termed the presentiment of things fortuitous. For if nothing can happen, or come to pass, or take place, unless it has been determined from all eternity that it shall happen at a certain time what, chance can there be in anything? And if there is no such thing as chance, what becomes of your definition of divination, which you have called "a presentiment of fortuitous events?" although you said that everything which happened, or which was about to happen, depended on fate. Nevertheless, a great deal is said on this subject of fate by the Stoics. But of this elsewhere.

To return to the question at issue. If all things happen by fate, what is the use of divination?

VIII. For that which he who divines predicts, will truly come to pass; so that I do not know what character to affix to that circumstance of an eagle making our friend King Deiotaris renounce his journey; when, if he had not turned back, he would have slept in a chamber which fell down in the ensuing night, and have been crushed to death in the ruins. For if his death had been decreed by fate, he could not have avoided it by divination; and if it was not decreed by fate, he could not have experienced it.

What, then, is the use of divination, or what reason is there why I should be moved by lots, or entrails, or any kind of prediction? For if in the first Punic war it had been

settled by fate, that one of the Roman fleets, commanded by the consuls Lucius Junius and Publius Clodius, should perish by a tempest, and that the other should be defeated by the Carthaginians, then even if the chickens had eaten ever so greedily, still the fleets must have been lost. But if the fleets would not have perished, if the auspices had been obeyed, then they were not destroyed by fate. But you say that everything is owing to fate; therefore there is no such thing as divination.

If fate had determined, that in the second Punic war the army of the Romans should be defeated near the lake Thrasimenus, then could this event have been avoided, even if Flaminius the consul had been obedient to those signs and those auspices which forbade him to engage in battle? Certainly it might. Either, then, the army did not perish by fate—for the fates cannot be changed,—or if it did perish by fate (as you are bound to assert), then, even if Flaminius had obeyed the auspices, he must still have been defeated.

Where, then, is the divination of the Stoics? which is of no use to us whatever to warn us to be more prudent, if all things happen by destiny. For do what we will, that which is fated to happen, must happen. On the other hand, whatever event may be averted is not fated. There is, therefore, no divination, since this appertains to things which are certain to happen; and nothing is certain to happen, which may by any means be frustrated.

IX. Moreover, I do not even think that the knowledge of futurity would be useful to us. How miserable would have been the life of King Priam if from his youth he could have foreseen the calamities which awaited his old age! Let us, however, leave alone fables, and come to facts that are more near to us. I have recounted, in my essay entitled "Consolation," the misfortunes which have happened to the greatest men of our commonwealth. Omitting, therefore, the ancients, do you think that it would have been any advantage to Marcus Crassus, when he was flourishing with the amplest riches and gifts of fortune, to have foreknown that he should behold his son Publius slain, his forces defeated, and lose his own life beyond the Euphrates with ignominy and disgrace? Or do you think that Pompey would have experienced much satisfaction in being thrice made consul, and having received

three triumphs, and having attained the summit of glory by his heroic actions, if he could have foreseen that he should be assassinated in the deserts of Egypt after the defeat of his army, and that after his death those disasters should happen which we cannot mention without tears?

What do we think of Cæsar? Would it have been any pleasure to Cæsar to have anticipated by divination, that one day, in the midst of the throng of senators whom he himself had elected, in the temple of Victory built by Pompey, and before that general's statue, and before the eyes of so many of his own centurions, he should be slain by the noblest citizens, some of whom were indebted to him for their dignities,—aye, slain under such circumstances that not one of his friends, or even of his servants, would venture to approach him? Could he have foreseen all this, in what wretchedness would he have passed his life?

It is, therefore, certainly more advantageous for man to be ignorant of future evils than to know them. For it cannot be said, at least not by the Stoics, that Pompey would not have taken up arms, nor Crassus passed the Euphrates, nor Cæsar engaged in the civil war, if they had foreseen the future; therefore the end which they met with was not inevitably ordained by fate. For you insist upon it that all things happen by fate, therefore divination would have availed them nothing. It would even have deprived them of all enjoyment in the earlier part of their lives; for what gratification could they have enjoyed if they had been always thinking of their end?

Therefore, to whatever argument the Stoics resort in defence of divination, their ingenuity is always baffled. For if that which is to happen may happen in different modes, then, indeed, fortune may have great power; but that which is fortuitous cannot be certain. If, on the other hand, every event is absolutely determined by fate, and the time and circumstance in connexion with which it is to take place, what service can diviners render us by informing us that very sad events are portended for us?

X. They add, moreover, that when we are duly attentive to religious ceremonies, all things will fall more lightly on us. But if everything happens by fate, no religious ceremonies can lighten the event. Homer acknowledges this, when he

introduces Jupiter uttering complaints that he cannot save the life of his son Sarpedon against the order of fate; and the same sentiment is expressed in the Greek verse—

Great Destiny o'ermaster's Jove himself.

It appears to me that such a fate as this is justly ridiculed by the Atellane plays; but on such a serious subject we must not allow ourselves to be facetious.

I therefore conclude with this observation. If we cannot foresee anything which happens by chance, since that thing is necessarily uncertain, therefore there is no divination; and if, on the contrary, things that are to happen can be foreseen because they happen by an infallible fatality, there is no divination, because you say divination only relates to fortuitous events.

But what I have hitherto said respecting divination may be looked upon as a mere slight skirmishing of oratory. I must now enter on the contest in good earnest, and prepare to encounter the most formidable arguments of your cause.

XI. For you say that there exist two kinds of divination,—one artificial, the other natural. The artificial consists partly in conjecture, partly in continued observation.

The natural, on the other hand, is what the mind lays hold of or receives externally from the divinity, from which we all derive the origin, and fashioning, and preservation of our minds. Under the artificial divination you enumerate several varieties of divination connected with the inspection of entrails, the observation of thunderstorms and prodigies, and the auguries of those who deal in signs and omens. And under this artificial class you include all kinds of conjectural divination.

As to the natural species of divination, it appears to be sent forth and to issue either from a certain ecstasy of the spirit, or to be conceived by the mind when disengaged from the senses and from cares by sleep. But you suppose that all divination is derived from three things—God, Fate, and Nature. But as you could give no sound explanation, you laboured to confirm it by a wonderful multitude of imaginary examples, concerning which you must permit me to say, that a philosopher ought not to use evidences which may be true through accident, or false and fictitious through malice. It behoves you to show, by reason and argument, why each circum-

stance happens as it does, rather than by the events, especially when they are such as I am quite unable to give credit to.

XII. To begin then with the Soothsayers, whose science I believe that the interest of Religion and the State requires to be upheld. But as we are alone, it behoves us, and myself more especially, to examine the truth without partiality, since I am in doubt on many points.

Let us proceed, if you please, first to consider the inspection of the entrails of victims. Can you then persuade any man in his senses, that those events which are said to be signified by the entrails, are known by the augurs in consequence of a long series of observations? How long, I wonder! For what period of time can such observations have been continued? What conferences must the augurs hold among themselves to determine which part of the victim's entrails represents the enemy, and which the people; what sort of cleft in the liver denoted danger, and what sort presaged advantage? Have the augurs of the Etrurians, the Eleans, the Egyptians, and the Carthaginians arranged these matters with one another? But that, besides that it is quite impossible, cannot be imagined. For we see that some interpret the auspices in one way, and some in another, and no common rule of discipline is acknowledged among the professors of the art; and certainly if some secret virtue existed in the victim's entrails which clearly declared the future, it must either belong to the universal nature of things, or be connected in some way or other with the Deity himself. But what communication can there exist between so great and so divine a nature of things, one so beautiful, and so admirably diffused throughout every part and motion, and (I will not say) the gall of the cock, (though that, indeed, is said by many to be the most significant of all signs,) but the liver, or heart, or lungs of a fat bullock? Can such things possibly teach us the hidden mysteries of futurity?

XIII. Democritus, speaking as a natural philosopher, than which no class of men are more arrogant, on this subject, trifles ingeniously enough.

Man, who knows not the common facts of earth,
Must waste his time in star-gazing.

He remarks, that the colour and condition of the victim's entrails may indicate the nature of the pasturage, and the

abundance or scarcity of those things which the earth brings forth. He even supposes they may guide our opinions respecting the wholesomeness or pestilential state of the atmosphere. O happy man! such a person can certainly never want amusement. The idea of any one being so enchanted with such trifling, as not to see that this theory might be plausible, if, indeed, the entrails of all animals assumed the same appearance and colour at one and the same time! But if we discover that the liver of one animal is sound and healthy, and that of another withered and diseased at the same moment, what indication can we draw from the state and colour of the entrails?

Does this at all resemble the indications from which that Pherecydes, in a case which you have cited, predicted the approach of an earthquake from the drying up of a spring? It required a little confidence, I think, after the earthquake had taken place, to presume to say what power had produced it; [but] could they even foresee that it would take place at all from the appearance of a running spring? Many such stories are recounted in the schools, but we are not obliged to believe the whole of them. But even supposing that what Democritus says is true, when do we seek to know the general phenomena of nature by an examination of entrails; or when did soothsayers ever tell us anything of the sort from such an inspection? They warn us of danger from fire or water. Sometimes they predict that inheritances will be added to our fortunes, and sometimes that we shall lose what we already possess. They regard the cleft in the lungs as a matter of vital importance to our property and our very life; they investigate the top of the liver on all sides with the most scrupulous exactness, and if by any chance they cannot discover it, they affirm that nothing more disastrous could have happened.

XIV. It is impossible, as I have before observed, that such a system of observation can have any certainty about it; such divination as this flourished not among the ancients; it is the invention of mere art, if, indeed, there can be any art, properly so called, of things unknown. But what connexion has it with the nature of things? And even if it were united and joined therewith, so as to form one harmonious whole, which I see is the opinion of the natural philosophers,

and especially of those who say that all things that exist are but one whole; still what correspondence can there be between the order of the universe and the discovery of a treasure? For if an increase of my wealth is indicated by the entrails of a victim, and this fact is a necessary link in the chain of nature, then it follows, in the first place, that we must suppose that the entrails themselves form other links; and secondly, that my private gain is connected with the nature of things. Are not the natural philosophers ashamed to say such things as these? For, although there may be some connexion in the nature of things, which I admit to be possible,—(for the Stoics have collected many cases which they think confirm the notion, as when they assert that the little livers of little mice increase in winter, and that dry pennyroyal flourishes in the coldest weather, and that the distended vesicles, in which the seeds of its berries are contained, then burst asunder; that the chords of a stringed instrument at times give notes different from their usual ones; that oysters and other shell-fish increase and decrease with the growth and waning of the moon; and that trees lose their vitality as the moon declines, just as they dry up in winter, and that this is the time to cut them. Why need I speak of the seas, and the tides of the ocean, the flow and ebb of which are said to be governed by the moon? and many other examples might be related to prove that some natural connexion subsists between objects apparently remote and incongruous.

XV. Let us grant this, for it does not in the least make against our argument;—granting, I say, that there is a cleft of some kind in a liver, does that indicate gain to any one? By what natural affinity, by what harmony, by what secret accord of nature, or, to use the Greek term, by what *sympathy* can you discern a necessary relation between a cleft liver and my gain, or between my gain and heaven and earth, and the universal nature of things?

I may even grant you this, though I shall be greatly damaging my argument if I allow that there is any connexion between nature and entrails.

But suppose I make this concession, how does it happen that he who would obtain some benefit from the Gods can discover, just when he wishes, a victim exactly adapted to his

purpose? I had thought this objection was unanswerable, but see how cleverly you get over it. I do not blame you for this, I rather commend your memory. But I am ashamed of Antipater, Chrysippus, and Posidonius, who all assert the same proposition—namely, that the divine and sentient energy which extends through the universe, directs us even in the choice of the victim by whose entrails we are to frame our divinations. And to improve upon this theory, you agree with them in asserting that at the very instant that the sacrifice is offered, a certain appropriate change takes place in the victim's entrails, so that we can therein discover some significant addition or deficiency, since all things are obedient to the will of the Gods.

Believe me, there is not an old woman in the world so superstitious as gravely to believe these things. Can you imagine that the same bullock, if chosen by one man, will have the head of the liver, and if chosen by another will not have it? Can this same head come and go at the instant just to accommodate the individual who offers the sacrifice? Do you not perceive that there must be considerable chance in the choice of the victim? and in fact the thing speaks for itself, that this must be the case. For when one ill-omened victim is discovered to have had no head to its liver, it often happens that the one which is offered immediately afterwards has the most perfect entrails imaginable. What then becomes of the menaces of the first victim's entrails, or how have the Gods been so suddenly appeased?

XVI. But you will say, that in the entrails of the fat bull which Cæsar offered, there was no heart, and since it was not possible that this animal could have lived without a heart, we must suppose that the heart was annihilated at the instant of immolation. How is it that you think it impossible that an animal can live without a heart, and yet do not think it impossible that its heart could vanish so suddenly, nobody knows whither? For myself, I know not how much vigour in a heart is necessary to carry on the vital function, and suspect that if afflicted by any disease, the heart of a victim may be found so withered, and wasted, and small, as to be quite unlike a heart. But on what argument can you build an opinion that the heart of this same fat bullock, if it existed in him before, disappeared at the instant of immola-

tion? Did the bullock behold Cæsar in a heartless condition even while arrayed in the purple, and thus lose its own heart by mere force of sympathy?

Believe me, you are betraying the city of philosophy while defending its castles. In trying to prove the truth of the auguries, you are overturning the whole system of physics. A victim has a heart, and head of the liver: the moment that you sprinkle him with meal and wine they depart, some God carries them off, some power destroys or consumes them. It is not nature alone, therefore, which causes the decay and destruction of everything; and there are some things which arise out of nothing, and some which suddenly perish and become nothing. What natural philosopher ever said such a thing as this? The soothsayers affirm it. Do you then think that you are to believe them rather than the natural philosophers?

XVII. Again, when you sacrifice to several Gods at the same time, how is it that the sacrifice is favourably received by some, and is rejected by others? And what inconsistency must there be among the Gods, if they threaten by the first entrails, and promise good fortune by the second! Or is there such strong dissension among the Deities, even when they are nearly related to each other, that certain entrails bode good when offered to Apollo, and evil when offered to his sister Diana? It is clear that since the victims are brought by chance, the entrails must in the case of each sacrificer depend upon what victim falls to his share, and that very thing requires some divination to know what victim falls to each person's share, as, in the case of lots, what is drawn by each person.

Then you will speak of lots, though you are not strengthening the authority of sacrifices by comparing them to lots, but weakening that of lots by comparing them to sacrifices.

Do you think, when we send a messenger to Æquilibrium to bring us a lamb to sacrifice, and the lamb which is brought to me possesses entrails peculiarly accommodated to the circumstances of the case, that the messenger has been guided to him not by chance, but by divine direction? For if you wish to signify that in this case chance interferes, as being some lot connected with the will of the Gods, I am sorry that your friends the Stoics should give the Epicureans

such occasion to ridicule them, for you know well how they deride all such ideas.

And, indeed, it is no hard matter to be facetious on such an idea. Epicurus, in order to show his wit on the subject, introduced transparent airy deities, residing, as it were, between the two worlds as between two groves, that they may avoid destruction from the fall of either. These deities, it seems, possess bodies like ourselves, though I cannot find that they make any use of them.

Epicurus therefore, who, by a roundabout argument of this kind, takes away the Gods, naturally feels no hesitation in taking away divination also. But though he is consistent with himself, the Stoics are not; for as the God of Epicurus never troubles himself with any business, either regarding himself or others; he, therefore, cannot grant divination to men. On the other hand, the God of the Stoics, even though he does not grant divination, must still regulate the affairs of the universe and take care of mankind.

Why, then, do you involve yourself in these dilemmas which you can never disentangle? For this is the way in which, when they are in a hurry, they usually sum up the matter—"If there are Gods, there must be divination; but there are gods, therefore there is divination." It would be much more plausible to say—"There is no divination, therefore there are no Gods." Observe how imprudently the Stoics make this assertion, that if there is no divination, there are no Gods; for divination is plainly discarded, and yet we must retain a belief in Gods.

XVIII. After having thus destroyed divination by the inspection of entrails, all the rest of the science of the sooth-sayers is at an end; for prodigies and lightning follow in the same category. With respect to the latter, their predictions are founded on a long series of observations, while the interpretation of prodigies proceeds chiefly on inference and conjecture.

What observations, then, have been made about lightning? The Etrurians, forsooth, have divided heaven into sixteen parts; for it was not very difficult to double the four quarters, which we recognise, into eight, and then to repeat the process, so as by that means to say from what direction the lightning had come. But in the first place, what

difference does it make? Secondly, what does such a thing intimate?

Is it not plain from the astonishment which was at first excited in men's minds, because they feared the thunder and the hurling of the thunderbolt, that they believed that they were the immediate manifestations brought about by the all-powerful ruler of all things, Jupiter? This is the reason of the enactment in the public registers, that the comitia of the people shall not be held *when Jupiter thunders and lightens*. It was enacted, perhaps with a view to the interest of the state, for our ancestors wished to have pretexts for not holding the comitia. Therefore, in the case of the comitia, lightning is the only vitiating irregularity. But in all other matters it is a most favourable auspice if it comes on the left hand. But we will speak of the auspices hereafter; at present we will confine ourselves to lightning.

XIX. What can be less proper for natural philosophers to say, than that anything certain is indicated by things which are uncertain? I cannot believe that you are one of those who imagine that there were Cyclopes in mount Ætna who forged Jove's thunderbolt, for it would be wonderful indeed if Jupiter should so often throw it away when he had but one. Nor would he warn men by his thunderbolts what they should do or what they should avoid.

For the opinion of the Stoics on this point is, that the exhalations of the earth which are cold, when they begin to flow abroad, become winds; and when they form themselves into clouds, and begin to divide and break up their fine particles by repeated and vehement gusts, then thunder and lightning ensue; and that when by the conflict of the clouds the heat is squeezed out so as to emit itself, then there is lightning. Can we, then, look for any intimation of futurity in a thing which we see brought about by the mere force of nature, without any regularity or any determined periods?

If Jupiter wished that we should form divinations by lightnings, would he throw away so many flashes in vain? For what good does he do when he throws a thunderbolt into the middle of the sea, or upon lofty mountains, which is very common, or upon deserts, or in the countries of those nations among which no meteorological observations are made? Oh! but a head was discovered in the Tyber. As if I

affirmed that those soothsayers had no skill ! What I deny is only their divination. For the distribution of the firmament, which we have just mentioned, and their various observations, enable them to note the direction from which the lightning has proceeded, and where it falls. But no reason can inform us of its signification.

XX. You will, however, urge against me my own verses—

The father of the Gods who reigns supreme
On high Olympus, smote his proper fane,
And hurl'd his lightnings through the heart of Rome.

At the same time the statue of Natta and the images of the Gods, and Romulus and Remus, with that of the beast who was nursing them, were struck by the thunderbolt and thrown down ; and the answers of the soothsayers, with reference to these prodigies, were found perfectly correct. That also was a surprising thing, that the statue of Jupiter was placed in the Capitol, two years later than it had been contracted for, at the very time that information of the conspiracy was being laid before the senate. Will you, then, (for this is the way you are used to argue with me,) bring yourself to uphold that side of the question in opposition to your own actions and writings ?

You are my brother, and all you say is entitled to my respect. Yet what is there here that offends you ? Is it the thing itself, which is of such and such a character, or I myself, who only wish to get at the truth ? I therefore say nothing upon it for the sake of contradiction, and only seek from you yourself information respecting all the principles of the art of soothsaying.

But you have involved yourself in an inextricable dilemma ; for foreseeing that you would be hard pressed, when I should urge you to explain the cause of every divination, you made many excuses to show why, when you were sure of the fact, you did not inquire into its principles and causes,—that the question was, what was done, and not why it was done ; as if I granted that it was done at all, or as if it were not the duty of a philosopher to inquire into the reason why everything takes place. At the same time you quoted my prognostics, and spoke of the scammony, the aristoloch, and other herbs, whose virtues were evident to you from their effects, though the law of their operation was unknown to you.

XXI. All this is, however, beside the main question. For the Stoic Boethus, whose name you have cited, and even our friend Posidonius have investigated the causes of prognostics, and though it is not easy to discover the cause of such occult mysteries, yet the facts themselves may be observed and animadverted upon.

But as to the statue of Natta and the tables of the law which were struck by lightning, what observations were made, or what was there ancient connected with the matter? The Pinarii Nattæ are noble, therefore danger was to be feared from the nobility. This was a very cunning device of Jupiter! Romulus, represented by the sculptor as sucking a she-wolf, was likewise smitten by the lightning. Hence, according to you, some danger to the city of Rome was threatened. How cleverly does Jupiter make us acquainted with future events by such signs as these! Again, his statue was being erected at the very same time that the conspiracy was being discovered in the senate, and you conceive this coincidence happened rather by the providence of God than by any chance of fortune. And you think that the statuary who had contracted for the making of that column with Torquatus and Cotta, was not so long delayed in accomplishing his work by idleness or poverty, but by the special interposition of the immortal Gods.

Now I do not absolutely deny that such might possibly be the case; but I do not know that it was, and wish to be instructed by you. For when some things appeared to me to have happened by chance in the way in which the soothsayers had predicted, you launched out into a long discourse on the doctrine of chances, saying that four dice thrown at hazard may produce Venus by accident, but that four hundred dice cannot produce a hundred Venuses. In the first place, I know no reason in the nature of things why they should not do even this; but I will not argue that point, for you have plenty of similar examples, and talk about a chance dashing of colours, the snout of a pig, and many other similar instances. You say that Carneades argued in the same way about the head of a little Pan; as if that might not have happened by chance, and as if there must not be in all marble the raw material of even such a head as Praxiteles would have made. For a perfect head is only formed by

cutting away. Praxiteles adds nothing to the marble, but when much that was superfluous is removed, and the features are arrived at, then you learn that that which is now polished up was always contained within.

Such a figure, therefore, may have spontaneously existed in the quarries of Chios. But grant that this is a fiction, have you never fancied that you could discover in the clouds the figures of lions and centaurs? Accident may, therefore, sometimes imitate nature, though you denied that just now.

XXII. But as we have sufficiently discussed divination by entrails and lightning, we must now consider portents and prodigies, in order that we may leave no branch of the system of the soothsayers untouched.

You have mentioned a wonderful story of a mule that was delivered of a colt; a strange event, because of its extreme rarity. But if such a thing were impossible, it would never happen at all; and this may be said against all sorts of prodigies, that those things which are impossible never happened at all; and if they are possible, it need not surprise us that they happen occasionally.

Besides, in extraordinary events, ignorance of their causes produces astonishment; but in ordinary events such ignorance occasions no such result. The man who is astonished if a mule brings forth a colt, does not know how it is that a mare brings forth a foal, or indeed how, in any case, nature effects the birth of a living animal; but he is not surprised at what he sees frequently, even if he does not know why it happens; but if that which he never beheld before happens, then he calls it a prodigy. In this case, is it a prodigy when the mule conceives, or when she brings forth? Perhaps the conception may have been contrary to nature, but after that her delivery is almost necessary.

But we have spoken enough on this topic: let us examine the origin of the establishment of soothsayers. For when we are acquainted with it, we shall be better able to judge what degree of credit it is entitled to.

XXIII. They tell us that as a labourer one day was ploughing in a field in the territory of Tarquinium, and his ploughshare made a deeper furrow than usual, all of a sudden there sprung out of this same furrow a certain Tages, who, as it is recorded in the books of the Etrurians, possessed the

visage of a child, but the prudence of a sage. When the labourer was surprised at seeing him, and in his astonishment made a great outcry, a number of people assembled round him, and before long all the Etrurians came together at the spot. Tages then discoursed in the presence of an immense crowd, who treasured up his words with the greatest care, and afterwards committed them to writing. The information they derived from this Tages was the foundation of the science of the soothsayers, and was subsequently improved by the accession of many new facts, all of which confirmed the same principles.

Here is the story that the Etrurians give out to the world. This record is preserved in their sacred books, and from it their augurial discipline is deduced.

Now do you imagine that we need a Carneades or Epicurus to refute such a fable as this? Lives there any one so absurd as to believe that this (shall I say god, or man?) was thus ploughed up out of the earth? If he was a god, why did he conceal himself under the earth against the order of nature, so as not to behold the light till he was ploughed up? Could not that same god have instructed mankind from a station somewhat more elevated? And if this Tages was a man, how could he have lived thus buried and smothered in the earth? and how could he have learnt the wonders he taught to others?

But I am even more foolish than those who believe such nonsense, for thus wasting so much time in refuting them.

XXIV. There is an old saying of Cato, familiar enough to everybody, that "he wondered that when one soothsayer met another, he could help laughing." For of all the events predicted by them, how very few actually happen? And when one of them does take place, where is the proof that it does not take place by mere accident?

When Hannibal fled to king Prusias, and was eager to wage war with the enemy, that monarch replied that he dared not do so, because the entrails of the sacrifice wore an unfavourable aspect. "Would you, then," said Hannibal, "rather trust a bit of calf's flesh than a veteran general?" And as to Cæsar, when he was warned by the chief soothsayer not to venture into Africa before the winter, did he not cross? If he had not done so, all the forces of the enemy would have assembled in one place.

Why need I enumerate the responses of the soothsayers, of which I could cite an infinite number, which have either received no accomplishment at all, or an accomplishment exactly the reverse of the prediction? In this last Civil War, for instance—good Heavens! how often were their responses utterly falsified by the result! How many false prophecies were sent to us from Rome into Greece! How many oracles in favour of Pompey! For that general was not a little affected by entrails and prodigies. I have no wish to recount these things to you, nor indeed is it necessary, for you were present. But you see that nearly all the events took place in the manner exactly contrary to the predictions. So much for responses. Let us now say a word or two on prodigies.

XXV. You have mentioned several things on this topic which I wrote during my consulship. You have brought up many of those anecdotes collected by Sisenna before the Marston War, and many recorded by Callisthenes before the unfortunate battle of the Spartans at Leuctra, of each of which I will speak separately, as far as seems necessary; but at present we must discuss of prodigies in general.

For what is the meaning of this kind of divination—this dreadful denouncing of impending calamities—derived from the Gods? In the first place, what is the object of the Gods, in giving us prodigies and signs which we cannot understand without interpreters, and in advertising us of disasters which we cannot avoid? But even honest men do not act thus, giving notice to their friends of impending misfortune which they cannot possibly avoid; and physicians, though they are often aware of the fact, yet never tell their patients that they must needs die of the complaint from which they are suffering. For the prediction of an evil is only beneficial when we can point out some means of avoiding it or mitigating it.

What good, then, did these prodigies, or their interpreters, do to the Spartans, or more recently to the Romans? If they are to be considered as the signs of the Gods, why were they so obscure? For if they were sent in order that we might understand what was about to happen, then it ought to have been declared intelligibly; and if we were not intended to know, then they should not have been given even obscurely.

XXVI. As for all conjectures on which this kind of divina-

tion depends, the opinions of men differ so much from each other that they often make very opposite deductions from the same thing. For as in legal suits, the plea of the plaintiff is contrary to that of the defendant, and yet both are within the limits of credibility,—so in all those affairs which only admit of conjectural interpretation, the reasoning must be extremely uncertain. And as for those things which are caused at times by nature, and at others by chance, (sometimes, too, likeness gives rise to mistakes,) it is very foolish to attribute all these things to the interpositions of the Gods, without examining their proximate causes.

You believe that the Bœotian diviners of Lebadia foreknew by the crowing of the cocks that the victory belonged to the Thebans, because these birds only crow when they are victorious, and hold their peace when they are beaten. Did, then, Jupiter give a signal to so important a city by the means of hens? But do cocks only crow when they are victorious? At that time they were crowing, and they had not conquered. You say that this was a prodigy. It would have been a prodigy, and a very great one, if the crowing had proceeded from fishes instead of birds. But what hour is there of day, or of night, when cocks do not crow? and if they are sometimes excited to crow by their joy in victory, they may likewise be excited to do the same by some other kind of joy.

Democritus, indeed, states a very good reason why cocks crow before the dawn; for, as the food is then driven out of their stomachs, and distributed over their whole body and digested, they utter a crowing, being satiated with rest. But in the silence of the night, says Ennius, “they indulge their throats, which are hoarse with crowing, and give their wings repose.” As, then, this animal is so much inclined to crow of its own accord, what made it occur to Callisthenes to assert that the Gods had given the cocks a signal to crow; since either nature or chance might have done it?

XXVII. It was announced to the senate that it had rained blood. that the river had become blackened with blood, and that the statues of the immortal gods were covered with sweat. Do you imagine that Thales or Anaxagoras, or any other natural philosopher, would have given credence to such news? Blood and sweat only proceed from the animal body; there might have been some discoloration caused by some

contagion of earth very like blood, and some moisture may have fallen on the statues from without, resembling perspiration, as we see sometimes in plaster during the prevalence of a south wind; and in time of war such phenomena appear more numerous and more important than usual, as men are then in a state of alarm, while they are not noticed in peace. Besides, in such periods of fear and peril, such stories are more easily believed, and invented with more impunity.

We are, however, so silly and inconsiderate, that if mice, which are always at that work, happen to gnaw anything, we immediately regard it as a prodigy. So because, a little before the Marsian war, the mice gnawed the shields at Lanuvium, the soothsayers declared it to be a most important prodigy; as if it could make any difference whether mice, who day and night are gnawing something, had gnawed bucklers or sieves. For if we are to be guided by such things, I ought to tremble for the safety of the commonwealth, because the mice lately gnawed Plato's Republic in my library; and if they had eaten the book of Epicurus on Pleasure, I ought to have expected that corn would rise in the market.

XXVIII. Are we, then, alarmed if at any time any unnatural productions are reported as having proceeded from man or beast? One of which occurrences, to be brief, may be accounted for on one principle. Whatever is born, of whatever kind it may be, must have some cause in nature, so that even though it may be contrary to custom, it cannot possibly be contrary to nature. Investigate, if you can, the natural cause of every novel and extraordinary circumstance:—even if you cannot discover the cause, still you may feel sure that nothing can have taken place without a cause; and, by the principles of nature, drive away that terror which the novelty of the thing may have occasioned you. Then neither earthquakes, nor thunderstorms, nor showers of blood and stones, nor shooting stars, nor glancing torches will alarm you any more.

If you ask Chrysippus to explain the laws that govern these phenomena, though he is a great defender of divination, he will never tell you that they have happened by chance, but he will give you a natural explanation of all of them. For, as it has been before stated, nothing can happen without a cause, and nothing happens which is

impossible; nor, if that has happened which could happen, ought it to be regarded as a prodigy. Therefore there are no such things as prodigies. For if we place in the rank of prodigies every rare occurrence, it follows that a wise man is one of the greatest prodigies. For I believe there are fewer instances of wise men in the world, than of mules which have brought forth young.

So this principle concludes that that which cannot take place in the nature of things never does take place; and that that which can take place in the nature of things, is not a prodigy, and therefore there are no prodigies at all. Therefore a diviner and interpreter of prodigies being consulted by a man who informed him, as a great prodigy, that he had discovered in his house a serpent coiled around a bar, answered very discreetly, that there was nothing very wonderful in this, but if he had found the bar coiled around the serpent, this would have been a prodigy indeed. By this reply, he plainly indicated that nothing can be a prodigy which is consistent with the nature of things.

XXIX. Caius Gracchus wrote to Marcus Pomponius, that his father having caught two serpents in his house, sent to consult the soothsayers. Why were two serpents entitled to such an honour more than two lizards or two mice? Because these are every day occurrences, you would reply, while serpents were comparatively rare; as if it signified how often a thing which was possible took place. But I marvel, if the release of the female snake caused the death of Tiberius Gracchus, and that of the male was to be fatal to Cornelia, why he let either of them escape. For he does not record that the soothsayers had told him what would happen if he let neither of the snakes escape. But it seems T. Gracchus died soon after, doubtless of some natural malady which destroyed his constitution, and not because he had saved the life of a viper.

Not that the infelicity of the haruspices is so great that their predictions are never fulfilled by any chance whatever. And, I must confess, if I could but believe it, I should exceedingly wonder at the story which you have cited from Homer respecting the prediction of Calchas, who, from observing the number of a flock of sparrows, foretold the number of years that would be expended in the siege of Troy.

Of which conjecture Homer makes Agamemnon¹ speak thus, if I may repeat you a translation of the passage which I made in a leisure hour :—

XXX. Not for their grief the Grecian host I blame ;
 But vanquish'd ! baffled ! oh, eternal shame !
 Expect the time to Troy's destruction giv'n,
 And try the faith of Calchas and of heav'n.
 What pass'd at Aulis, Greece can witness bear,
 And all who live to breathe this Phrygian air,
 Beside a fountain's sacred brink was raised
 Our verdant altars, and the victims blazed ;
 ('Twas where the plane-tree spreads its shades around)
 The altars heaved ; and from the crumbling ground
 A mighty dragon shot, of dire portent ;
 From Jove himself the dreadful sign was sent.
 Straight to the tree his sanguine spires he roll'd,
 And curl'd around in many a winding fold.
 The topmost branch a mother-bird possest ;
 Eight callow infants fill'd the mossy nest ;
 Herself the ninth : the serpent as he hung,
 Stretch'd his black jaws, and crush'd the crying young ;
 While hov'ring near, with miserable moan,
 The drooping mother wail'd her children gone.
 The mother last, as round the nest she flew,
 Seized by the beating wing, the monster slew ;
 Nor long survived, to marble turn'd he stands
 A lasting prodigy on Aulis' sands.
 Such was the will of Jove ; and hence we dare
 Trust in his omen and support the war.
 For while around we gazed with wond'ring eyes,
 And trembling sought the Pow'rs with sacrifice,
 Full of his god, the rev'rend Calchas cried :
 Ye Grecian warriors, lay your fears aside,
 This wondrous signal Jove himself displays,
 Of long, long labours, but eternal praise.
 As many birds as by the snake were slain,
 So many years the toils of Greece remain ;
 But wait the tenth, for Ilion's fall decreed.
 Thus spoke the prophet, thus the fates succeed.

Now is not this a curious mode of augury?—to conjecture by the number of sparrows eaten by a serpent, the number of years expended in the Trojan war. Why years rather than months or days ? And how was it that Calchas selected sparrows, in which there is nothing supernatural, for the signs of his prophecy ? while he is silent about the serpent, which

¹ This is a mistake of Cicero's. It is Ulysses who speaks. The passage occurs Iliad ii. 299—330.

was changed, as it is said, into stone (an event which is impossible). Lastly, what analogy or relation can subsist between the sparrows seen and the years predicted?

As to what you have said respecting the serpent which appeared to Sylla while he was sacrificing, I recollect the whole circumstance; and remember that just as Sylla was about to attack the enemy at Nola, he made a sacrifice, and that at the moment the victim was offered, a serpent issued from beneath the altar, and that the same day a glorious victory was gained,—not owing to the advice of the soothsayers, but to the skill of the general.

XXXI. And prodigies of this kind have nothing miraculous in them; which, when they have taken place, are brought under conjecture by some particular interpretation, as in the case of the grain of wheat found in the mouth of Midas while an infant, or that of the bees, which are said to have settled on the lips of the infant Plato. Such things are less admirable for themselves than for the conjectures they gave rise to; for they may either not have taken place at the time specified, or have been fulfilled by mere accident.

I likewise suspect the truth of the report which you have related respecting Roscius—namely, that a serpent was found coiled round him when he was in his cradle. But even if it be a fact that a serpent was thus in the cradle, it is not very wonderful, especially in Solonium, where snakes are in the habit of basking before the fire. As to the interpretation which the soothsayers gave of the circumstance, that the child would become most illustrious and most celebrated, I am astonished that the immortal Gods should have announced such great glory to a comedian, and preserved such an obstinate silence respecting Scipio Africanus.

You have related several prodigies which happened to Flaminius; for instance, that his horse suddenly fell with him,—there is surely nothing very astonishing in that. Also, that the standard of the first centurion could not easily be pulled out of the earth. Perhaps the standard-bearer was pulling but timidly at the stick which he had fixed in the ground with confident resolution. What is the wonder in the horse of Dionysius having escaped out of the river, and in his afterwards having had a swarm of bees cluster on his mane? But because Dionysius happened to ascend the

throne of Syracuse soon after this event, what had happened by chance was regarded as an extraordinary prodigy and prognostic.

You go on to say, that at Lacedæmon, the armour in the temple of Hercules rattled. At Thebes the closed gates of the temple of the same God suddenly burst open of their own accord, and the bucklers which had been suspended on the walls fell to the ground. Certainly nothing of this kind could have happened without some motion or impulse; but why need we impute such motion to the Gods rather than call it an accident?

XXXII. At Delphi, you say, that a chaplet of wild herbs suddenly appeared growing on the head of Lysander's statue. Do you think then that the chaplet of herbs existed before any seed was ripened? These seeds were probably carried there by birds, not by human agency, and whatever is on a head may seem to resemble a crown. And as to the circumstance which you add, that about the same time the golden stars of Castor and Pollux, placed in the temple of Delphi, suddenly vanished, and could nowhere be discovered; this seems to me not so much the work of the Gods, as the sacrilege of thieves.

I certainly do wonder at the roguery of the Ape of Dodona being recorded in the Greek histories. For what is less strange than that a most mischievous animal should have upset the urn, and scattered the oracular lots? The historians, however, deny that this prodigy was followed by any disastrous event occurring among the Lacedæmonians.

Now to come to what you have reported respecting the citizen of Veii, who declared to the Senate that if the Lake Albanus overflowed, and ran into the sea, Rome would perish, and that if its course were diverted elsewhere, Veii must fall. Accordingly the water of the Alban lake was subsequently drained away by new channels, not for the safety of the citadel and the city, but solely for the benefit of the suburban district.

A short time afterwards, a voice was heard, warning certain individuals to beware lest Rome should be taken by the Gauls; and upon this they consecrated an altar on the New Road, to Aius the Speaker. What, then, did this Aius the Speaker speak and talk, and derive his name from that cir-

cumstance, when no one knew him ; and has he been silent ever since he has had an habitation, an altar, and a name ? And the same remark will apply to Juno the Admonitress ; for what warning has she ever given us, except the one respecting the full sow ?

XXXIII. This is enough to say about prodigies. Let me now speak of auspices and of lots—those, I mean, which are thrown at hazard, not those which are announced by vaticination, which we more properly call oracles, and which we shall discuss when we investigate divination of the natural order ; and after this we will consider the astrology of the Chaldeans. But first let us consider the question of auspices. It is a very delicate matter for an augur to speak against them. Yes, to a Marsian perhaps, but not to a Roman. For we are not like those who attempt to predict the future by the flight of birds, and the observation of other signs ; and yet I believe that Romulus, who founded our city by the auspices, considered the augural science of great utility in foreseeing matters. For antiquity was deceived in many things, which time, custom, and enlarged experience have corrected. And the custom of reverence for, and discipline and rights of, the augurs, and the authority of the college, are still retained for the sake of their influence on the minds of the common people.

And certainly the consuls P. Claudius and L. Junius deserved severe punishment, who set sail in defiance of the auspices ; for they ought to have been obedient to the established religion, and not to have rejected so obstinately the national ceremonials. Justly, therefore, was one of them condemned by the judgment of the people, while the other perished by his own hand. Flaminius, likewise, was not duly submissive to the auspices ; and that was the reason, you say, why he was defeated. But, the year afterwards, Paullus was guided by them. Did he the less for that perish with his army in the battle of Cannæ ?

Even allowing the existence of auspices, which I do not, certainly those at present in use, whether by means of birds or celestial signs, are but mere semblances of auspices, and not real ones.

XXXIV. “ Quintus Fabius, I pray thee, assist me in the auspices.” He answers, “ I have heard.” The augural officer

among our forefathers was a skilful and learned man ; now they take the first that offers. For a man must needs be skilful and learned who understands the meaning of silence. For in auspices we call that silence which is free from all irregularity. To understand this, belongs to a perfect augur.

It sometimes happens, however, that when he who wishes to consult the auspices has said to the augur whom he has chosen to assist him, " Say, if silence is observed," the augur, without looking above or around him, answers immediately, " Silence appears to be observed." On this the consulter rejoins, " Tell me whether the chickens are eating." The augur replies, " They are eating." But when the consulter further demands, " What kind of fowls are they, and whence do they come?" the augur answers, " The chickens were brought in a cage by a person who is termed a poulterer."

Such, then, are the illustrious birds whom we call, forsooth, the messengers of Jupiter ; and whether they eat or not, what does it signify ? Certainly nothing to the auspices. But since, if they eat at all, some portion of food must inevitably fall on the ground and strike (*pavire*) the earth, this was at first called *terripavium*, then *terripudium*, and is now called *tripudium*. When, therefore, the chicken lets fall from its beak a particle of its food, the augur declares that the *tripudium solistimum* is consummated.

XXXV. What true divination can there be in an auspice of this nature, so artificially forced and tortured ? which, we have a proof, was not used among the most ancient augurs ; for we have an ancient decree of the college of augurs, that any bird may make the tripudium. So that, then, there would be an auspice if the bird was free to show itself, and the bird might appear to be the messenger and interpreter of Jupiter. But when a miserable bird is kept in a cage, and ready to die of hunger,—if such an one, when pecking up its food, happens to let some particle fall, can you think this an auspice, or do you believe that Romulus consulted the gods in this manner ?

Do you imagine that those who pretend to augury apply themselves at the present day to discern the signs of heaven ? No ; they give their orders to the poulterer. He makes his report.

It has been reckoned an excellent auspice on all occasions,

among the Romans, when it thunders on the left hand, except in reference to the Comitia ; and this exception was doubtless contrived for the benefit of the commonwealth, in order that the chiefs of the state might be the interpreters of the Comitia in whatever concerns the judgments of the people, the rights of the laws, and the creation of the magistrates. "But," you argue, "in consequence of the letters of Tiberius Gracchus, Scipio Nasica and Caius Martius Figulus resigned the consulship, because the augurs determined that they had been irregularly created." Well, who denies that there is a school of Augurs? What I deny is, that there is any such thing as divination.

"But the soothsayers are diviners ; and after Tiberius Gracchus had introduced them into the senate, on account of the sudden death of the individual whose office it was to report the order of the elections, they said that the Comitia had not been legally constituted."

Now, in reference to this case, observe that they could not speak by authority of the summoner of the president of the centuries, for he was dead ; and conjecture without divination could say that. Or perhaps what they said was no better than the result of chance, which prevails to a considerable extent in all affairs of this nature. For what could the soothsayers of Etruria know as to whether the tent they observed was as it should be, and whether the regulations of the *pomœrium*, or circumvallation, were exactly obeyed.

For myself, I agree with the sentiments of Caius Marcellus rather than with those of Appius Claudius, who were both of them my colleagues ; and I think that, although the college and law of augurs were first instituted on account of the reverence entertained for divination in ancient times, they were afterwards maintained and preserved for the sake of the state.

XXXVI. Of this, however, more elsewhere. At present, let us examine the auguries of other nations who have evinced therein more superstition than art. They make use of all kinds of birds for their auspices ; we confine ourselves to few : and one set of omens are reckoned unfavourable by them, and a different set by us.

King Deiotarus often asked me for an account of our discipline and system of divination, and I asked him for

information about his. Good heavens! how different were the two methods, in some instances, so much so as to be downright contradictory to one another. And he had recourse to augurs on all occasions; but how very seldom do we apply to them unless the auspices are required by the people!

Our ancestors were unwilling to wage any war without consulting the auspices. But how many years have elapsed since this ceremony has been neglected by our proconsuls and proprætors? They never take auspices; they do not pass over rivers by the encouragement of omens; nor do they wait for the intimation of the sacred chickens.

As to that divination which consists in observing the flight of birds from some elevated spot—once considered of so much consequence in military expeditions,—Mareus Marcellus, who was consul five times, as well as imperator and chief augur too, omitted it altogether. What is become, then, of divination by birds, which (as wars are carried on by people who take no care about any auspices) seems to be retained by the city magistrates, while it is renounced by our military commanders? So much did Marcellus despise auspices, that when he was proceeding on any enterprise, he was accustomed to travel in a closed litter, that he might not be liable to be hindered by them. And we augurs now-a-days act much in the same way, when, for fear of what is called a joint auspice, we order the sacrificial cattle to be separated from each other. Not that I commend conduct like this; for to make these contrivances, either that an auspice should not happen at all, or that if it happens it should not be seen,—what is it but an attempt to avoid the admonitions of Jupiter?

XXXVII. It is ridiculous enough for you to assert that this king Deiotarus did not repent of having believed the auspices which he experienced when he went in search of Pompey, because he had, by doing his duty, thus secured the fidelity and friendship of the Romans; for that praise and glory were dearer to him than his kingdom and possessions. I dare say they were; but this has nothing to do with the auspices. Surely no crow could inform him that it was a piece of magnanimity to defend the liberty of the Roman people. It was he himself who felt spontaneously what he did feel; and

birds can do no more than signify bare events, be they fortunate or disastrous.

Thus, I conceive that Deiotarus in this affair followed no other auspices than those of conscience, which taught him to prefer his duty to his interest. But if the birds showed him that the result would be prosperous, they certainly deceived him ; for he fled from the battle, together with Pompey, and a grievous time it was for him. From this general he was compelled to separate—another affliction ; and, to crown his troubles, he soon had Cæsar quartered upon him, both as a guest and an enemy. What could be more painful than this ? Lastly, Cæsar, after having deprived him of the tetrarchy of the Trogini, and bestowed it on a certain Pergamenian of his train,—after having likewise deprived him of Armenia, which had been granted him by the senate,—after having been entertained by him with most princely hospitality, left his entertainer the king wholly stripped of his possessions.

It is needless to add more. I will return to my original subject. If we seek to know events by those auspices which are sought from birds, it appears by this argument that no birds could truly have predicted prosperity to king Deiotarus. If we want to know our duty, that is not to be sought from augury, but from virtue.

XXXVIII. I say nothing, then, of the augural staff of Romulus, which you declare to have remained unconsumed by fire in the midst of a general conflagration ; and pass over the razor of Attius Navius, which is reported to have cut through a whetstone. Such fables as these should not be admitted into philosophical discussions.

What a philosopher has to do is, first, to examine the nature of the augural science, to investigate its origin, and to pursue its history. But how pitiful is the nature of a science which pretends that the eccentric motions of birds are full of ominous import, and that all manner of things must be done, or left undone, as their flights and songs may indicate ! How can their inclinations to the right or left determine the power of auspices ? and how, when, and by whom were such absurd regulations as these invented ?

The Etrurian soothsayers hold as the author of their discipline a child whom a ploughshare suddenly dug up from a clod of the earth. Whom do we Romans look upon as the

author of ours? Is it Attius Navius? But Romulus and Remus lived several years before him, and they were both augurs, as we are informed. Shall we call our system the invention of the Pisidians, the Cilicians, or the Phrygians? Shall we, by speaking thus, call men devoid of all civilization the authors of divination?

XXXIX. "But," you say, "all kings, people, and nations use auspices;" as if there was anything in the world so very common as error is, or as if you yourself, in judging, were guided by the opinion of the multitude.

How few, for instance, are there who deny that pleasure is a good: most people even think it the chief good. But is the Stoic frightened from his creed by their numbers? or does the multitude follow their authority in many things? What wonder is there, then, if in respect of auspices, and all kinds of divinations, weak spirits are affected by those popular superstitions, though they cannot overturn the truth?

And what uniformity or settled agreement exists between augurs? The poet Ennius, referring to our Roman augurs, says—

When on the left it thunders, all goes well.

In Homer, on the contrary, Ajax,¹ making some complaint or other to Achilles about the ferocity of the Trojans, speaks in this manner—

For them the father of the Gods declares,
His omens on the right, his thunder theirs.

So that omens on the left appear fortunate to us, while the Greeks and barbarians prefer those on the right. Although I am not unaware that our Romans call prosperous signs *sinistra*, even if they are in fact *dextra*. But certainly our countrymen used the term *sinistra*, and foreigners the word *dextra*, because that usually appeared the best. How great, however, is this contrariety! Why need I stop to mention that they use different birds and different signs from ourselves? they take their observations in a different way, and give answers in a different way; and it is superfluous to admit that some of these modes are adopted through error, some through superstition, and that they often mislead.

XL. To this catalogue of superstitions you have not hesi-

¹ This is another piece of forgetfulness on the part of Cicero.—See *Iliad*, ix. 236.

tated to add a number of omens and presages. For instance, you have quoted the words which Æmilia addressed to Paulus, that Perses had perished; which Paulus received as an omen of success. You quote likewise the speech that Cecilia made to her sister's daughter—"I yield my place to you." Nor is this all: you cite the phrase, *favete linguis* (keep silence); and you extol the prerogative presage derived from the name of the person who takes precedence in the elections of the comitia. I call this being ingenious and eloquent against yourself; for how, if you attend to things like these, can your mind be free and calm enough to follow, not superstition, but reason, as your guide in action? Is it not so? If any one, while speaking on his own affairs, in the course of his common conversation, drops a word that may seem to you to bear on anything which you are thinking or doing, shall that circumstance inspire you with either fear or energy?

When Marcus Crassus was embarking his army at Brundisium, a certain itinerant vender of figs from Caunus cried out in the harbour, "Will you buy any *cauneas*!" Let us say, if you please, that this was an omen against Crassus's expedition; for that it was as much as to say, *Cave ne eas* (Beware how you go), and that if Crassus had obeyed the omen he would not have perished. But if we regard such omens as these, we shall have to take notice of sneezes, the breaking of a shoe-tie, or the tripping over a pebble in walking.

It now remains for us to speak of the lots, and the Chaldean astrologers, vaticinations, and dreams. And first let us speak of lots.

XLI. What, now, is a lot? Much the same as the game of mora, or dice,¹ and other games of chance, in which luck and fortune are all in all, and reason and skill avail nothing. These games are full of trick and deceit, invented for the object of gain, superstition, or error.

But let us examine the imputed origin of the lots, as we did that of the system of the soothsayers.

We read in the records of the Prænestines, that Numerius Suffucius, a man of high reputation and rank, had often been commanded by dreams (which at last became very threaten-

¹ The Latin has *quod talos jacere, quod tesseras*,—*tali* being dice with four flat and two round sides, and *tesserae* dice with six flat sides.

ing) to cut a flint-stone in two, at a particular spot. Being extremely alarmed at the vision, he began to act in obedience to it, in spite of the derision of his fellow-citizens; and he had no sooner divided the stone, than he found therein certain lots, engraved in ancient characters on oak. The spot in which this discovery took place is now religiously guarded, being consecrated to the infant Jupiter, who is represented with Juno as sitting in the lap of Fortune, and sucking her breasts, and is most chastely worshipped by all mothers.

At the same time and place in which the Temple of Fortune is now situated, they report that honey flowed out of an olive. Upon this the augurs declared that the lots there instituted would be held in the highest honour; and, at their command, a chest was forthwith made out of this same olive-tree, and therein those lots are kept by which the oracles of Fortune are still delivered. But how can there be the least degree of sure and certain information in lots like these, which, under Fortune's direction, are shuffled and drawn by the hands of a child? How were the lots conveyed to this particular spot, and who cut and carved the oak of which they are composed?

"Oh," say they, "there is nothing which God cannot do." I wish that he had made these Stoical sages a little less inclined to believe every idle tale, out of a superstitious and miserable solicitude.

The common sense of men in real life has happily succeeded in exploding this kind of divination. It is only the antiquity and beauty of the Temple of Fortune that any longer preserves the Prænestine lots from contempt even among the vulgar. For what magistrate, or man of any reputation, ever resorts to them now? And in all other places they are wholly disregarded; so that Clitomachus informs us, that with reference to this, Carneades was wont to say that he had never been so fortunate as when he saw Fortune at Præneste. So we will say no more on this topic.

XLII. Let us now consider the prodigies of the Chaldeans. Eudoxus, who was a disciple of Plato, and, in the judgment of the greatest men, the first astronomer of his time, formed the opinion, and committed it to writing, that no credence should be given to the predictions of the Chaldeans in their calculation of a man's life from the day of his nativity.

Panætius, who is almost the only Stoic who rejects astrological prophecies, says that Archelaus and Cassander, the two principal astronomers of the age in which he himself lived, set no value on judicial astrology, though they were very celebrated for their learning in other parts of astronomy. Scylax of Halicarnassus, a great friend of Panætius, and a first-rate astronomer, and chief magistrate of his own city, likewise rejected all the predictions of the Chaldeans.

But to proceed merely on reason, omitting for the present the testimony of these witnesses.

Those who put faith in the Chaldeans, and their calculations of nativities, and their various predictions, argue in this manner : they affirm that in that circle of constellations which the Greeks term the Zodiac there resides a certain energy, of such a character that each portion of its circumference influences and modifies the surrounding heavens according to what stars are in those and the neighbouring parts at each season ; and that this energy is variously affected by those wandering stars which we call planets. But when they come into that portion of the circle in which is situated the rise of that star which appears anew, or into that which has anything in conjunction or harmony with it, they term it the true or quadrate aspect.

And moreover, as there happen at every season of the year several astronomical revolutions, owing to approximations and retirements of the stars which we see, which are affected by the power of the sun,—they think it not merely probable, but true, that according to the temperature of the atmosphere at the time must be the animation and formation of children from their mother's womb ; and that their genius, disposition, temper, constitution, behaviour, fortune, and destiny through life depend upon that.

XLIII. What an incredible insanity is this ! for every error does not deserve the mere name of folly. The Stoic Diogenes grants, that the Chaldeans possess the power of foreseeing certain events ; to the limit, that is, of predicting what a child's disposition and his particular talent and ability are likely to be. But he denies that the other things which they profess can possibly be known. For instance ; two twins may resemble each other in appearance, and yet their lives and fortunes may be entirely dissimilar.

Procles and Eurysthenes, kings of the Lacedæmonians, were twin-brethren. But they did not live the same number of years ; for Procles died a year before his brother, and much excelled him in the glory of his actions.

But I question whether even that portion of prophetic power which the worthy Diogenes concedes to the Chaldeans, by a sort of prevarication in argument, can be fairly ascribed to them. For, as according to them the birth of infants is regulated by the moon, and as the Chaldeans observe and take notice of the natal stars with which the moon happens to be in conjunction at the moment of a nativity, they are founding their judgment on the most fallacious evidence of their eyes, as to matters which they ought to behold by reason and intellect. For the science of Mathematics, with which they ought to be acquainted, should teach them the comparative proximity of the moon to the earth, and its relative remoteness from the planets Venus and Mercury, and especially from the sun, whose light it is supposed to borrow. And the other three intervals, those, namely, which separate the sun from Mars and from Jupiter and from Saturn, and the distance also between that and the heaven, which is the bound and limit of our universe, are infinite and immense. What influence, then, can such distant orbs transmit to the moon, or rather to the earth?

XLIV. Moreover, when these astrologers maintain, as they are bound to maintain, that all children that are born on the earth under the same planet and constellation, having the same signs of nativity, must experience the same destinies, they make an assertion which evinces the greatest ignorance of astronomy. For those circles which divide the heaven into hemispheres—circles which the Greeks call horizons, and the Latins *finientes*—perpetually vary according to the spot from which they are drawn ; and, therefore, the risings and settings of the stars appear to take place at different seasons to different races of men.

If, then, the condition of the atmosphere is affected by the energy and virtue of the stars, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, how can those children who are born at the same time in different climates be subject to the same starry influences in various quarters of the globe? For instance, in the country which we Romans inhabit, the dog-

star rises some days after the summer solstice, while among the Troglodytæ, a people of Africa, it is said to rise before it. So that if I were to grant that the heavenly influences have an effect upon all the children who are born upon the earth, it would follow, that all who are born at the same time in different regions of the earth, must be born not with the same but with different inclinations according to the different conditions of climate; which, however, they by no means admit. For they persist in maintaining that all children who are born at the same period, have at their nativity the same astrological destinies allotted to them, whatever their native country may be.

XLV. But what folly is it to imagine, that while attending to the swift motions and revolutions of heaven, we should take no notice of the changes of the atmosphere immediately around us,—its weather, its winds, and rains—when weather differs so much even in places which are nearest to one another, that there is often one weather at Tusculum and another at Rome; as is especially remarked by sailors, who, after having doubled a cape, often find the greatest possible change in the wind.

When the calmness or disturbed state of the weather is so variable, is it the part of a man in his senses to say that these circumstances have no effect on the births of children happening at that moment, (as, indeed, they have not,) and yet to affirm, that that subtle and indefinable thing, which cannot be felt at all, and can scarcely be comprehended,—namely, the conjuncture which arises from the moon and other stars, does affect the birth of children?—What? is it a slight error, not to understand that by this system that energy of seminal principles which is of so much influence in begetting and procreating the child is utterly put out of sight?—for who can help observing that the parents impress on their children, to a great extent, their own forms, manners, features, and gestures. Now this could hardly happen if it were not the power and nature of the parents which was the efficient cause, but the condition of the moon and the temperature of the heavens.

Why need I press the argument that those who are born at one and the same moment, are dissimilar in their nature, their lives, and their circumstances?

XLVI. Besides, is there any doubt that many persons, though they were born with great bodily defects, are nevertheless afterwards cured of them, and set right by the self-corrective power of their nature, or by the attention of their nurses, or the skill of their physicians? or that many children have been born so tongue-tied that they could not speak, and yet have been cured by the application of the knife? Many likewise by meditation or exercise have removed their natural infirmities. Thus Phalereus records that Demosthenes when young could not pronounce the letter R; but afterwards by constant practice he learnt to articulate it perfectly. Now, if such defects had been occasioned by the influence of the stars, nothing could have altered them.

Need I say more? Does not difference of situation make races of men different? It is easy enough to give a list of such instances; and to point out what differences exist between the Indians and Persians, the Æthiopians and Syrians, in respect both of their persons and characters, so as to present an incredible variety and dissimilarity. And this fact proves, that the climate influences the nativities of men far more than the aspect of the moon and stars. For though some pretend that the Chaldean astrologers have verified the nativities of children by calculations and experiments in the cases of all the children who have been born for 470,000 years, this is a mistake. For had they been in the habit of doing so, they would never have given up the practice. But, as it is, no author remains who knows of such a thing being done now, or ever having been done.

XLVII. You see that I am not using the arguments of Carneades, but those rather of Panætius, the chief of the Stoics. But answer me now this question. Were all those persons who were slain in the battle of Cannæ born under the same constellation, as they met with one and the same end? Again, have those men who are singular in their genius and courage, a separate, some peculiar star of their own too? For what moment is there in which a multitude of persons are not born? and yet no one has ever been like Homer.

And if the aspect of the stars and the state of the firmament influenced the birth of every being, it should, by parity of reasoning, influence inanimate substances; yet what can be more absurd than such an idea?

I grant, indeed, that Lucius Tarutius of Firma, my own personal friend, and a man particularly well acquainted with the Chaldean astrology, traced back the nativity of our own city, Rome, to those equinoctial days of the feast of Pales in which Romulus is reported to have begun its foundations, and asserted that the moon was at that period in Libra, and on this discovery, he hesitated not to pronounce the destinies of Rome.

Oh, the mighty power of delusion! Is even the birth-day of a city subject to the influence of the stars and moon? Granting even that the condition of the heavens, when he draws his first breath, may influence the life of a child, does it follow that it can have any effect on brick or cement, of which a city is composed?

Why need I say more? Such ideas as these are refuted every day. How many of these Chaldean prophecies do I remember being repeated to Pompey, Crassus, and to Cæsar himself! according to which, not one of these heroes was to die except in old age, in domestic felicity, and perfect renown; so that I wonder that any living man can yet believe in these impostors, whose predictions they see falsified daily by facts and results.

XLVIII. It only remains for us now to examine those two sorts of divination which you term natural, as distinguished from artificial—namely, vaticinations and dreams. With your permission, brother Quintus, we will now treat of these.

I shall be very well pleased to hear you, (answered Quintus,) for I entirely agree with all you have hitherto advanced, and, to tell you the truth, although I have had my feelings on the subject strengthened by your arguments, yet of my own accord I looked upon the opinion of the Stoics respecting divination as rather too superstitious, and was more inclined to favour the arguments which have been adduced by the Peripatetics, and the ancient Dicæarchus, and Cratippus, who now flourishes, who all maintain that there exists in the minds of men a certain oracular and prophetic power of presentiment, whereby they anticipate future events, whether they are inspired with a divine ecstasy, or are as it were disengaged from the body, and act freely and easily during sleep. I wish therefore to know what is your opinion

respecting these vaticinations and dreams, and by what ingenious devices you mean to invalidate them.

When Quintus had thus spoken, I proceeded again to speak, starting afresh, as it were, from a new beginning.

I am very well aware, brother Quintus, I replied, that you have always entertained doubts respecting the other kinds of divination; but that you are very favourable to the two natural kinds—namely, ecstasy and dreams, which appear to proceed from the mind when at liberty.

XLIX. I will therefore tell you my idea very candidly respecting these two species of divination, after I have examined a little the sentiment of the Stoics, and especially of our friend Cratippus, on this subject. For you said that Cratippus, Diogenes, and Antipater summed up the question in this manner:—"If there are Gods, and they do not inform men beforehand respecting future events, either they do not love men, or do not know what is going to happen; or they think that the knowledge of the future would be of no service to mankind; or they believe it inconsistent with the majesty of Gods to reveal to men the things that must come to pass; or, lastly, we must believe that even the Gods themselves are incapable of declaring them. But we cannot say that the Gods do not love man, for they are essentially benevolent and philanthropic. And they cannot be ignorant of those things, which they themselves have appointed and designed: neither can it be uninteresting or unimportant to us to know what must happen to us, for we should be more prudent if we did know. Nor can the Gods think it inconsistent with their dignity to advertise men of future events, for nothing can be more sublime than doing good. Nor are they unable to perceive the future beforehand. If, therefore, there are no Gods, they do not declare the future to us; but there are Gods, therefore they do declare. And if the Gods declare future events to us, they must have furnished us with means whereby we may apprehend them, otherwise they would declare them in vain; and if they have given us the means of apprehending divination, then there is a divination for us to apprehend—therefore there is a divination."

O acutest of men, in what concise terms do they think that they have settled the question for ever! They assume

premises to draw their conclusion from, not one of which is granted to them. But the only conclusion of an argument which can be approved, is one in which the point doubted of is established by facts which are not doubtful.

L. Do you not see how Epicurus, whom the Stoics forsooth term a blunderer, reasons in order to prove that the universe is infinite in the very nature of things? That which is finite, says he, has an end. Every one will concede this. Whatever has an end, may be seen externally from something else. This also may be granted him. Now that which includes all, cannot be discerned externally from anything else. This proposition likewise appears undeniable. Therefore that which includes all, having no end, is necessarily infinite. Thus by the proposition which we are compelled to admit, he clearly proves the point in question.

Now this is just what you dialecticians have not yet done in favour of divination; and you not only bring forward no proposition as your premises, so self-evident as to be universally admitted; but you assume such premises as, even if they be granted, your desired conclusion would be as far as ever from following. For instance, your first proposition is this: If there are Gods they must needs be benevolent. Who will grant you this? Will Epicurus, who asserts that the Gods do not care about any business of their own or of others? or will our own countryman Ennius, who was applauded by all the Romans, when he said—

I've always argued that the Gods exist,
But that they care for mortals I deny;

and then gives reasons for his opinion; but it is not necessary to quote him further. I have said enough to show that your friends assume as certain, propositions which are matters of doubt and controversy.

LI. The next proposition is this, That the Gods must needs know all things, because they have made all things. But how great a dispute is there as to this fact among the most learned men, several of whom deny that all things were created by the immortal Gods!

Again, they assert, that it is the interest of man to know those things which are about to come to pass. But Dicaearchus has written a great book to prove that ignorance of futurity is better than knowledge of futurity.

They deny that it is inconsistent with the majesty of the Gods to look into every man's house, forsooth, so as to see what is expedient for each individual. Nor is it possible, say they, for them to be ignorant of the future. This is denied by those who will not allow that what is future can be certain. Do not you see, therefore, that they have assumed as certain and admitted axioms, things which are doubtful?

After which, they twist the argument about and sum it up thus: "Therefore, there are no Gods; and they do not grant men intimations of the future." And, having settled the question thus, to their own satisfaction, they add, "But there are Gods;" a fact which is not admitted by all men; "therefore, they do grant intimations." Even that consequence I cannot see; for they may grant no intimations of the future and yet exist as Gods.

Again, it is asserted; If the Gods grant intimations to men respecting future events, they must grant some means of explaining these intimations. But surely the contrary may be the case; for the Gods may keep to themselves the meaning of the signs which they impart to men; for else, why should they teach it to the Etrurians rather than to the Romans?

Again, they argue, that if the Gods have given men the means of understanding the signs they impart, then the existence of divination is manifest. But grant that the Gods do give such means, what does it avail, if we happen to be incapable of receiving them?

Last of all, their conclusion is; Therefore, there certainly is such a thing as divination. It may be their conclusion, but it is not proved; for, as they themselves have taught us, "false premises cannot produce a true result." Therefore, the whole conclusion falls to the ground.

LII. Let us now consider the arguments of that most excellent man, our friend Cratippus. As, says he, the use and function of sight cannot exist without the eyes—and yet the eyes do not always perform their office,—and, as he who has once enjoyed correct sight, so as to see what truly exists, is conscious of the reality of vision;—so, if the practice of divination cannot exist without the power of divination—and though in the exercise of this power of divination some errors may occur, and the diviner may be misled so as not to foresee.

the truth ; yet the existence of divination is sufficiently attested by the fact that some true divinations have been made, containing such exact predictions of all the particulars of future events, that they can never have been made by chance, —of which numerous instances might be cited. The existence of divination must therefore be admitted.

The argument is neatly and concisely stated. But Cratippus twice assumes what he wishes to prove ; and even if we were willing to grant him very large concessions, we could not possibly agree with his conclusions.

His argument is this : Though the eyes should sometimes possess very imperfect sight, yet, provided they sometimes see clearly, it is evident that the power of vision is in them. On the same principle, if any one has ever once uttered a true divination, he must always be considered as possessing the faculty of divining, even when he blunders.

LIIL. Now I entreat you, my dear Cratippus, to consider how little is the resemblance between these two cases. To me there is none at all. The eyes which see clearly exert no more than their natural faculty of sight. But minds, if they have sometimes truly foreseen future events, either in ecstasies or dreams, have done so by fortune and accident ; unless, indeed, you imagine those who believe that dreams are but dreams, will grant you that when they happen to dream anything that is true, it is no longer the effect of chance.

But we may concede for the present these two assumptions of Cratippus, which the Greek dialecticians would call *lemmata*. But we prefer speaking in Latin ; still the presumption, which they term *prolepsis*, cannot be granted.

Cratippus goes on assuming premises in this manner : There are, says he, presentiments innumerable which are not fortuitous. Now this we absolutely deny. See how great is the magnitude of the difference between us. Not being able to agree with his premises, I assert that he has drawn no conclusion. Oh, but perhaps it is very impudent of us not to concede a point which is so clear ! But what is clear ? “Why,” he replies, “that many predictions are fulfilled.” Yes ; but are there not many more which are not fulfilled ? Does not this very variation, which is the peculiar property of fortune, teach us that fortune, not nature, regulates such predictions ?

Moreover, if your conclusion is true, O renowned Cratippus!—for to you I address myself—do not you perceive that the soothsayers, and those who predict by thunder and lightning, and the interpreters of prodigies, and the augurs, and the Chaldean astrologers, and those who tell fortunes by drawing lots, will all bring forward the same argument as yourself in their own favour? Not one of these men has been so unfortunate as never on any occasion to find his predictions verified. This being the case, you must either admit all the other kinds of divination which you now most properly reject; or, if you absolutely condemn them, I do not see how you will be able to defend those two which you retain as favourable exceptions. For on the same principle that you maintain these, the others also may be true which you discard.

LIV. But what authority has this same ecstasy, which you choose to call divine, that enables the madman to foresee things inscrutable to the sage, and which invests with divine senses a man who has lost all his human ones?

We Romans preserve with solicitude the verses which the Sibyl is reported to have uttered when in an ecstasy,—the interpreter of which is by common report believed to have recently uttered certain falsities in the senate, to the effect that he whom we did really treat as king should also be called king, if we would be safe. If such a prediction is indeed contained in the books of the Sibyl, to what particular person or period does it refer? For, whoever was the author of these Sibylline oracles, they are very ingeniously composed; since, as all specific definition of person and period is omitted, they in some way or other appear to predict everything that happens. Besides this, the Sibylline oracles are involved in such profound obscurity, that the same verses might seem at different times to refer to different subjects.

It is evident, however, that they are not a song composed by any one in a prophetic ecstasy, as the poem itself evinces, being far less remarkable for enthusiasm and inspiration than for technicality and labour; and as is especially proved by that arrangement which the Greeks call acrostics—where, from the first letter of each verse in order, words are formed which express some particular meaning; as is the case with

some of Ennius's verses, the initial letters of which make, "Which Ennius wrote." But such verses indicate rather attention than ecstasy in those who write them.

Now, in the verses of the Sibyl, the whole of the paragraph on each subject is contained in the initial letters of every verse of that same paragraph. This is evidently the artifice of a practised writer, not of one in a frenzy ; and rather of a diligent mind than of an insane one. Therefore, let us consider the Sibyl as so distinct and isolated a character, that, according to the ordinance of our ancestors, the Sibylline books shall not even be read except by decree of the senate, and be used rather for the putting down than the taking up of religious fancies. And let us so arrange matters with the priests under whose custody they remain, that they may prophesy anything rather than a king from these mysterious volumes ; for neither Gods nor men any longer tolerate the notion of restoring kingly government at Rome.

LV. But many people, you say, have in repeated instances uttered true predictions ; as, for example, Cassandra, when she said, "Already is the fleet,"¹ &c. ; and in a subsequent prophecy, "Ah ! see you not ?" &c. Do you then expect me to give credence to these fables ? I will grant that they are as delightful as you please to call them,—that they are polished up with every conceivable beauty of language, sentiment, music, and rhythm. But we are not bound to invest fictions of this kind with any authority, or to give them any belief.

And, on the same principle, I do not think any one bound to pay any attention to such diviners as Publicius (whoever he may be), or Martius, or to the secret oracles of Apollo ; of which some are notoriously false, and others uttered at random, so that they command little respect, I will not say from learned men, but even from any person of plain common sense.

"What !" you will say, "did not that old sailor of the fleet of Coponius predict truly the events which took place ?" No doubt he did ; but they happened to be those very things which at the time everybody thought most likely to ensue. For we were daily hearing that the two armies were situated near each other in Thessaly ; and it appeared to us that Cæsar's army had the greater audacity, inasmuch as it was

See book i. chap. 31.

² See book i. chap. 50.

waging war against its own country, and the greater strength, being composed of veteran soldiers. And as to the battle, there was not one of us who did not dread the result, though, as brave men should, we kept our anxiety to ourselves, and expressed no alarm.

What wonder, however, was it that this Greek sailor was forced from all self-possession and constancy, as is very common, by the greatness of his terror and affright; and that, being driven to distraction by his own cowardice, he uttered those convictions when raving mad which he had cherished when yet sane? Which, in the name of Gods and men, is most likely; that a mad sailor should have attained to a knowledge of the counsels of the immortal Gods, or that some one of us who were on the spot at the time—myself, for instance, or Cato, or Varro, or Coponius himself—could have done so?

LVI. I now come to you,

Apollo, monarch of the sacred centre
Of the great world, full of thy inspiration,
The Pythian priestesses proclaim thy prophecies.

For Chrysippus has filled an entire volume with your oracles, many of which, as I said before, I consider utterly false, and many others only true by accident, as often happens in any common conversation. Others, again, are so obscure and involved, that their very interpreters have need of other interpreters; and the decisions of one lot have to be referred to other lots. Another portion of them are so ambiguous, that they require to be analysed by the logic of dialecticians. Thus, when Fortune uttered the following oracle respecting Cræsus, the richest king of Asia,—

“When Cræsus has the Halys cross’d,
A mighty kingdom will be lost;”

that monarch expected he should ruin the power of his enemies; but the empire that he ruined was his own. And whichever result had ensued the oracle would have been true.

But, in truth, what reason have I to believe that such an oracle was ever uttered respecting Cræsus? or why should I think Herodotus more veracious than Ennius? Is the one less full of fictions respecting Cræsus than the other is respecting Pyrrhus? For who now believes that the following answer was given to Pyrrhus by the oracle of Apollo?—

“ You ask your fate ; O king, I answer you,
Æacides the Romans will subdue ! ”

For, in the first place, Apollo never uttered an oracle in Latin ; secondly, this oracle is altogether unknown to the Greeks. Besides, in the days of Pyrrhus, Apollo had already left off composing verses. Lastly, although it was always the case, as is said in these lines of Ennius,—

“ The Æacids were but a stupid race,
More warlike than sagacious,”—

yet even Pyrrhus might without much difficulty have perceived the ambiguity of the phrase,

“ Æacides the Romans will subdue ; ”

and might have seen that it did not apply more to himself than it did to the Romans.

As to that ambiguity which deceived Cræsus, it might even have deceived Chrysippus. This one could not have deluded even Epicurus.

LVII. But the chief argument is, why are the Delphic oracles altered in such a way that—I do not mean only lately in our own time, but for a long time—nothing can have been more contemptible ?

When we press our antagonists for a reason for this, they say that the peculiar virtue of the spot from which those exhalations of the earth arose, under the influence and excitement of which the Pythian priestess uttered her oracles, has disappeared by the lapse of time. You might suppose they were speaking of wine or salt, which do lose their flavour by lapse of time ; but they are talking thus of the virtue of a place, and that not merely a natural, but a divine virtue ; and how is that to have disappeared ? By reason of age, is your reply. But what age can possibly destroy a divine virtue ? and what virtue can be so divine as an exhalation of the earth which has the power of inspiring the mind, and rendering it so prophetic of things to come, that it can not only discern them long before they happen, but even declare them in verse and rhythm ? And when did this magical virtue disappear ? Was it not precisely at the time when men began to be less credulous ?

Demosthenes, who lived nearly three hundred years ago, said that even in his time the Pythia Philippized—that is to

say, supported Philip's influence; and his expression was meant to convey the imputation that she had been bribed by Philip. From which we may infer that other oracles besides those of Delphi were not quite immaculate. Somehow or other, certain philosophers who are very superstitious—not to say fanatical—appear to prefer anything to behaving with common sense themselves; and so you prefer asserting that that has vanished, and become extinct, which, if it ever had existed, must certainly have been eternal, rather than not believe what is wholly incredible.

LVIII. The error with regard to the divination of dreams is another of the same kind; their arguments for which are extremely far-fetched and obscure. They affirm that the minds of men are divine, that they came from God, and that the universe is full of these consenting intelligences. That, therefore, by this inherent divinity of the mind, and by its conjunction with other spirits, it may foresee future events. But Zeno and the Stoics supposed the mind to contract, to subside, to yield, and even to sleep, itself. And Pythagoras and Plato, authors of the greatest weight, advise men, with a view of seeing things more certainly in sleep, to go to bed after having gone through a certain preparatory course of food and other conduct. Pythagoras, for this reason, counselled his disciples to abstain from beans; with the idea that this species of food excited the mind, not the stomach. In short, somehow or other, I know nothing is so absurd as not to have found an advocate in one of the philosophers.

Do we then think that the minds of men during sleep move by an intrinsic internal energy, or that, as Democritus pretends, they are affected with external and adventitious visions? On either supposition we may mistake during our dreams many false things for true.

For to people sailing, those things appear to be in motion which are stationary, and by a certain ocular deception, the light of a candle sometimes seems double. Why need I instance the number of false appearances which are presented to the eyes of men, among those who labour under drunkenness, or maniacs?

Now, if we cannot trust such appearances as those, I know not why we are to place any absolute reliance on the visions of dreams; for you might as well, if you pleased, argue from

these errors as from dreams. For instance, that if stationary objects appear to move, you might say that this appearance indicated the approach of an earthquake, or some sudden flight; and that lights seen double presage wars, and discords, and seditions.

LIX. From the visions of drunkards and madmen one might, doubtless, deduce innumerable consequences by conjecture, which might seem to be presages of future events. For what person who aims at a mark all day long will not sometimes hit it? We sleep every night; and there are very few on which we do not dream; can we wonder then that what we dream sometimes comes to pass?

What is so uncertain as the cast of dice? and yet no one plays dice often without at times casting the point of Venus, and sometimes even twice or thrice in succession. Shall we, then, be so absurd as to attribute such an event to the impulse of Venus, rather than to the doctrine of chances? If then, on ordinary occasions, we are not bound to give credit to false appearances, I do not see why sleep should enjoy this special privilege, that its false seemings should be honoured as true realities.

If it were an institution of nature that men when they sleep really did the things which they dream about, it would be necessary to bind all persons going to bed both hand and foot, for they would otherwise while dreaming perpetrate more outrages than maniacs. Now since we place no confidence in the visions of madmen, simply because they are delusions, I do not see why we should rely on those of dreamers, which are often the wilder of the two. Is it because madmen do not think it worth while to relate their visions to diviners, but those who dream do?

Once more I put this question. If I feel inclined to read or write anything, or to sing or play on an instrument, or to pursue the sciences of geometry, physics, or dialectics, am I to wait for information in these sciences from a dream, or shall I have recourse to study, without which none of those things can be either done or explained? Again, if I were to wish to take a voyage, I should never regulate my steering by my dreams. For such conduct would bring its own immediate punishment.

How, then, can it be reasonable for an invalid to apply for

relief to an interpreter of dreams rather than to a physician? Can Esculapius or Serapis, by a dream, best prescribe to us the way to obtain a cure for weak health? And cannot Neptune do the same for a pilot in his art? Or will Minerva give us medicine without troubling the doctor? And still will the Muses refuse to impart to dreamers the art of writing, reading, and the other sciences? But if the blessing of health were conveyed to us in dreams, these other good things would certainly be so too. But unfortunately the science of medicine cannot be learnt in dreams, and the other arts are in a similar predicament. And if that be the case, then all the authority of dreams is at an end.

LX. But this is only a superficial argument. Let us now penetrate the heart of this question.

For either some divine energy which takes care of us, gives us presentiments in our dreams; or those who explain them do, by a certain harmony and conjunction of nature which they call *συμπάθεια* (sympathy), understand by means of dreams what is suitable for everything, and what is the consequence of everything; or, lastly, neither of these things is true; but there is a constant system of observation of long standing, by which it had been remarked, that after certain dreams certain events usually follow.

The first thing then for us to understand is, that there is no divine energy which inspires dreams; and this being granted, you must also grant that no visions of dreamers proceed from the agency of the Gods. For the Gods have for our own sake given us intellect sufficiently to provide for our future welfare. How few people then attend to dreams, or understand them, or remember them! How many, on the other hand, despise them, and think any superstitious observation of them a sign of a weak and imbecile mind!

Why then should God take the trouble to consult the interest of this man, or to warn that one by dreams, when he knows that they not only do not think them worth attending to, but they do not even condescend to remember them. For a God cannot be ignorant of the sentiments of every man, and it is unworthy of a God to do anything in vain, or without a cause; nay, that would be unworthy of even a wise man. If, therefore, dreams are for the most part disregarded, or despised, either God is ignorant of that being

the fact, or employs the intimation by dreams in vain. Neither of these suppositions can properly apply to God, and therefore it must be confessed, that God gives men no intimations by means of dreams.

LXI. Again, let me ask you, if God gives us visions of a prophetic nature, in order to apprise us of future events, should we not rather expect them when we are awake than when we are asleep? For, whether it be some external and adventitious impulse which affects the minds of those who are asleep, or whether those minds are affected voluntarily by their own agency, or whether there is any other cause why we seem to see and hear or do anything during sleep, the same impulses might surely operate on them when awake. And if for our sakes the Gods effect this during sleep, they might do it for us while awake.

Especially as Chrysippus, wishing to refute the Academicians, makes this remark—That those inspirations, visions, and presentiments which occur to us awake, are much more distinct and certain than those which present themselves to dreamers. It would, therefore, have been more worthy of the divine beneficence while exerting its care for us, rather to favour us with clear visions when we are awake, than with the perplexed phantasms of dreams; and since that is not done, we must believe that these phantasms are not divine at all. Moreover, what is the use of such round-about and circuitous proceedings, as for it to be necessary to employ interpreters of dreams, rather than to proceed by a straightforward course? If God were indeed anxious for our interests, he would say, “Do this—do not that;” and he would give such intimations to a waking rather than to a sleeping man; but as it is, who would venture to assert that all dreams are true? Ennius says, that some dreams are prophetic; he adds also, that it does not follow that all are so.

LXII. Now whence arises this distinction between true dreams and false ones? and if true dreams come from God, from whence come the false ones? For if these last do likewise come from God, what can be more inconsistent than God? And what can be more ignorant conduct than to excite the minds of mortals by false and deceitful visions? But if only true dreams come from God, and the false and

groundless ones are merely human delusions, what authority have you for making such a distinction as is implied in saying, God did this, and nature that? Why not rather say either that all dreams come from God (which you deny), or all from nature? which necessarily follows, since you deny that they proceed from God.

By nature I mean that essential activity of the mind owing to which it never stands still, and is never free from some agitation or motion or other. When in consequence of the weakness of the body it loses the use of both the limbs and the senses, it is still affected by various and uncertain visions arising (as Aristotle observes) from the relics of the several affairs which employed our thoughts and labours during our waking hours; owing to the disturbances of which, marvellous varieties of dreams and visions at times arise. If some of these are false, and others true, I shall be glad to be informed by what definite art we are to distinguish the true from the false. If there be no such art, why do we consult the interpreters? If there be any such art, then I wish to know what it is.

LXIII. But they will hesitate. For it is a matter of question, which is more probable; that the supreme and immortal Gods, who excel in every kind of superiority, employ themselves in visiting all night long not merely the beds, but the very pallets of men, and as soon as they find any person fairly snoring, entertain his imagination with perplexed dreams and obscure visions, which sends him in great alarm as soon as daylight dawns to consult the seer and interpreter; or whether these dreams are the result of natural causes, and the ever-active, ever-working mind having seen things when awake, seems to see them again when asleep. Which is the more philosophical course, to interpret these phenomena according to the superstitions of old women, or by natural explanations?

So that even if a true interpretation of dreams could exist, it is certainly not in the possession of those who profess it, for these people are the lowest and most ignorant of the people. And it is not without reason that your friends the Stoics affirm, that no one can ever be a diviner but a wise man.

Chrysippus, indeed, defines divination in these words: "It

is," says he, "a power of apprehending, discerning, and explaining those signs which are given by the Gods to men as portents;" and he adds, that the proper office of a sooth-sayer is to know beforehand the disposition of the Gods in regard to men, and to declare what intimations they give, and by what means these prodigies are to be propitiated or averted. The interpretation of dreams he also defines in this manner. "It is," says he, "a power of beholding and revealing those things which the Gods signify to men in dreams." Well, then, does this require but a moderate degree of wisdom, or rather consummate sagacity, and perfect erudition?—and a man so endowed we have never known.

LXIV. Consider, therefore, whether even if I were to concede to you that there is such a thing as divination—which I never will concede—it would still not follow that a diviner could be found to exercise it truly. But what strange ideas must the Gods have, if the intimations which they give us in dreams are such as we cannot understand of ourselves, and such, too, as we cannot find interpreters of: acting almost as wisely as the Carthaginians and Spaniards would do if they were to harangue in their native languages in our Roman senate without an interpreter.

But what is the object of these enigmas and obscurities of dreamers? For the Gods ought to wish us to understand those things which they reveal to us for our own sake and benefit. What! is no poet, no natural philosopher obscure? Euphorion certainly is obscure enough, but Homer is not; which, then, is the best? Heraclitus is very puzzling, Democritus is very lucid; are they to be compared? You, for my own sake, give me advice that I do not understand!

What is it, then, that you are advising me to do? Suppose a medical man were to prescribe to a sick man an earth-born, grass-walking, house-carrying, unsanguineous animal, instead of simply saying, a snail; so Amphion in Pacuvius speaks of—

A four-footed and slow-going beast,
Rugged, debased, and harsh; his head is short,
His neck is serpentine, his aspect stern;
He has no blood, but is an animâl
Inanimate, not voiceless.

When these obscure verses had been duly recited, the Greeks cried out, We do not understand you unless you tell us plainly what animal you mean? I mean, said Pacuvius, I mean in one word, a tortoise. Could you not, then, said the questioner, have told us so at first?

LXV. We read in that volume which Chrysippus has written concerning dreams, that some one having dreamed in the night that he saw an egg hanging on his bed-post, went to consult the interpreter about it. The interpreter informed him that the dream signified that a sum of money was concealed under his bed. He dug, and found a little gold surrounded by a heap of silver. Upon this, he sent the interpreter as much of the silver as he thought a fair reward. Then said the interpreter, "What! none of the yolk?" For that part of the egg appeared to have intimated gold, while the rest meant silver.

But did no one else ever dream of eggs; if others have, too, then why is this man the only one who ever found a treasure in consequence? How many poor people are there worthy of the help of the Gods, to whom they vouchsafe no such fortunate intimations! And, again, why did this individual receive such an obscure sign of a treasure as could be afforded by the resemblance of an egg, instead of being distinctly commanded at once to look for a treasure, in the same way as Simonides was expressly forbidden to put to sea? Therefore, obscure dreams are not at all consistent with the majesty of the Gods.

LXVI. But let us now treat of those dreams which you term clear and definite, such as that of the Arcadian whose friend was killed by the inn-keeper at Megara, or that of Simonides, who was warned not to set sail by an apparition of a man whose interment he had kindly superintended. The history of Alexander presents us with another instance of this kind, which I wonder you did not cite, who, after his friend Ptolemy had been wounded in battle by a poisoned arrow, and when he appeared to be dying of the wound, and was in great agony, fell asleep while sitting by his bed, and in his slumber is said to have seen a vision of the serpent which his mother Olympias cherished, bringing a root in his mouth, and telling him that it grew in a spot very near at hand, and that it possessed such medicinal virtue, that it would easily cure

Ptolemy if applied to his wound. On awaking, Alexander related his dream, and messengers were sent to look for that plant, which, when it was found, not only cured Ptolemy, but likewise several other soldiers, who during the engagement had been wounded by similar arrows.

You have related a number of dreams of this nature borrowed from history. For instance, that of the mother of Phalaris—that of King Cyrus—that of the mother of Dionysius—that of Hamilcar the Carthaginian—that of Hannibal—that of Publius Decius—that notorious one of the president—that of Caius Græchus—and the recent one of Cæcilia, the daughter of Metellus Balearicus. But the main part of these dreams happened to strangers, and on that account we know little of their particular circumstances:—some of them may be mere fictions; for who are they vouched by?

As to those dreams that have occurred in our personal experience, what can we say about them,—about your dream respecting myself and my horse being submerged close to the bank; or mine, that Marius with the laurelled fasces ordered me to be conducted into his monument?

LXVII. All these dreams, my brother, are of the same character, and, by the immortal Gods, let us not make so poor a use of our reason, as to subject it to our superstition and delusions. For what do you suppose the Marius was that appeared to me? His ghost or image, I suppose, as Democritus would call it. Whence, then, did his image come from? For images, according to him, flow from solid bodies and palpable forms. What body then of Marius was in existence? It came, he would say, from that body which had existed; for all things are full of images. It was, then, the image of Marius that haunted me on the Atinian territory, for no forms can be imagined except by the impulsion of images.

What are we to think then? Are those images so obedient to our word that they come before us at our bidding as soon as we wish them; and even images of things which have no reality whatsoever? For what form is there so preposterous and absurd that the mind cannot form to itself a picture of it? so much so indeed that we can bring before our minds even things which we have never seen; as, for instance, the situations of towns and the figures of men.

When, then, I dream of the walls of Babylon, or the countenance of Homer, is it because some physical image of them strikes my mind? All things, then, which we desire to be so, can be known to us, for there is nothing of which we cannot think. Therefore, no images steal in upon the mind of the sleeper from without; nor indeed are such external images flowing about at all; and I never knew any one who talked nonsense with greater authority.

The energy and nature of human minds is so vigorous that they go on exerting themselves while awake by no adventitious impulse, but by a motion of their own, with a most incredible celerity. When these minds are duly supported by the physical organs and senses of the body, they see and conceive and discern all things with precision and certainty. But when this support is withdrawn, and the mind is deserted by the languor of the body, then it is put in motion by its own force. Therefore, forms and actions belong to it; and many things appear to be heard by, and said to it.

Then, when the mind is in a weak and relaxed state, many things present themselves to it commingled and varied in every kind of manner; and most especially do the reminiscences of those things flit before the mind and move about, which excited its interest or employed its active energies when awake. As, for instance, Marius at that time was often present to my mind while I recollected with what magnanimity and constancy he had borne his sad misfortunes; and this, I imagine, is the reason why I dreamed of him.

LXVIII. You also were thinking of me with great anxiety, when suddenly I appeared to you to have just escaped out of the river. For there were in both of our minds the traces of our waking thoughts. In both instances, however, there were certain additional circumstances; as in mine, the visit to the temple of Marius; and in yours, the reappearance of the horse on which I was riding, and who sunk at the same time with myself. Do you think then, you will say, that any old woman would be so doting as to believe dreams if they did not sometimes and at random turn out true? A dragon appeared to address Alexander. Doubtless this might be true, or it might be false; but whichever the case may have been, there is surely nothing very wonderful about it; for he did not hear this serpent speaking—he only

dreamed that he heard him; and to make the story more remarkable, the serpent appeared with a branch in its mouth, and yet spoke: still nothing is difficult or impossible in a dream.

I would ask, however, how it was that Alexander had this one dream so remarkable and so certain, though he had no such dream on any other occasion, nor have other people seen many such. For myself, excepting that about Marius, I do not recollect having experienced one worth speaking of. I must, therefore, have wasted to no purpose as many nights, as I have slept during my long life.

Now, indeed, on account of the intermission of my forensic labours, I have diminished my evening studies, and added some noonday slumbers, in which I never indulged before. But yet, though I sleep so much more than formerly, I am never visited with a prophetic dream, which I should consider a singular favour now, though engaged in such weighty affairs. Nor do I seem ever to experience any more important dream than when I see the magistrates in the forum, and the senate in the senate-house.

LXIX. In truth, (and this is the second branch of your division,) what connexion and conjunction of nature (which, as I have said, the Greeks term *συμπάθεια*,) is there of such a character, that a treasure is to be understood by an egg? Physicians, indeed, know of certain facts by which they perceive the approaches and increase of diseases; there are also some indications of a return to health; so that the very fact whether we have plenty to eat or whether we are dying of hunger, is said to be indicated by some kinds of dreams. But by what rational connexion are treasures, and honours, and victories, and things of that kind, joined to dreams?

They tell us, that a certain individual dreaming of sexual coition, ejected calculi: I grant that sympathy may have had something to do in a case like this,—because, in sleeping, his imagination might have been so affected with sensual images, that such an emission took place by the force of nature, rather than by supernatural phantasms. But what sympathy could have presented to Simonides the image of the person, who in a dream warned him not to put to sea? Or what sympathy could have occasioned the vision of Alcibiades, who, a little before his death, is said to have dreamed that

he was arrayed in the robes of Timandra his mistress? What relation could this have with the event which afterwards happened to him; when, being slain and cast naked into the street and abandoned by all the world, his mistress took off her mantle and covered his dead body with it? Was this then fixed as a piece of futurity, and had it natural causes, or was it mere accident that the dream was seen, and came true?

LXX. Do not the conjectures of the interpreters of dreams rather indicate the subtlety of their own talents, than any natural sympathy and correspondence in the nature of things?

A runner, who intended to run in the Olympic games, dreamed during the night that he was being driven in a chariot drawn by four horses. In the morning he applied to an interpreter. He replied to him, You will win: that is what is intimated by the strength and swiftness of the horses. He then applied to Antiphon, who said to him, By your dream it appears that you must lose the race; for do you not see that four reached the goal before you?

Here is another story respecting an athlete; and the books of Chrysippus and Antipater are full of such stories. However, I will return to the runner. He then went to a soothsayer and informed him that he had just dreamed that he was changed into an eagle. You have won your race (said the seer), for this eagle is the swiftest of all birds. He also went to Antiphon, who said to him, You will certainly be conquered; for the eagle chases and drives other birds which fly before it, and consequently is always behind the rest.

A certain matron, who was very anxious to have children, and who doubted whether she was pregnant or not, dreamed one night that her womb was sealed up; she, therefore, asked a soothsayer whether her dream signified her pregnancy? He said, No; for the sealing implied, that there could be no conception. But another whom she consulted said, that her dream plainly proved her pregnancy; for vessels that have nothing in them are never sealed at all. How delusive, then, is this conjectural art of those interpreters! Or do these stories that I have recited, and a host of similar ones which the Stoics have collected, prove anything else but the subtlety of men, who, from certain imaginary analogies of things, arrive at all sorts of opposite conclusions?

Physicians derive certain indications from the veins and

breath of a sick man; and have many other symptoms by which they judge of the future. So, when pilots see the cuttlefish leaping, and the dolphins betaking themselves to the harbours, they recognise these indications as sure signs of an approaching storm. Such signs may be easily explained by reference to the laws of nature; but those which I was mentioning just now cannot possibly be accounted for in the same manner.

LXXI. But the defenders of divination reply, (and this is the last objection I shall answer,) that a long continuance of observations has created an art. Can, then, dreams be experimented on? And if so, how? for the varieties of them are innumerable. Nothing can be imagined so preposterous, so incredible, or so monstrous, as to be beyond our power of dreaming. And by what method can this infinite variety be either fixed in memory or analysed by reason?

Astrologers have observed the motion of the planets, for a certain order and regularity in the course of these stars has been discovered which was not suspected. But tell me, what order or regularity can be discerned in dreams? How can true dreams be distinguished from false ones; since the same dreams are followed by different results to different people, and, indeed, are not always attended by the same events in the case of the same persons?

For this reason I am extremely surprised that, though people have wit enough to give no credit to a notorious liar, even when he speaks the truth, they still, if one single dream has turned out true, do not so much distrust one single case because of the numbers of instances in which they have been found false, as think multitudes of dreams established because of the ascertained truth of this one.

If, then, dreams do not come from God, and if there are no objects in nature with which they have a necessary sympathy and connexion, and if it is impossible by experiments and observations to arrive at a sure interpretation of them, the consequence is, that dreams are not entitled to any credit or respect whatever.

And this I say with the greater confidence, since those very persons who experience these dreams cannot by any means understand them, and those persons who pretend to interpret them, do so by conjecture, not by demonstration. And in

the infinite series of ages, chance has produced many more extraordinary results in every kind of thing than it has in dreams; nor can anything be more uncertain than that conjectural interpretation of diviners, which admits not only of several, but often of absolutely contrary senses.

LXXII. Let us reject, therefore, this divination of dreams, as well as all other kinds. For, to speak truly, that superstition has extended itself through all nations, and has oppressed the intellectual energies of almost all men, and has betrayed them into endless imbecilities: as I argued in my treatise on the Nature of the Gods, and as I have especially laboured to prove in this dialogue on Divination. For I thought that I should be doing an immense benefit both to myself and to my countrymen if I could entirely eradicate all those superstitious errors.

Nor is there any fear that true religion can be endangered by the demolition of this superstition; for it is the part of a wise man to uphold the religious institutions of our ancestors, by the maintenance of their rites and ceremonies. And the beauty of the world and the order of all celestial things compels us to confess that there is an excellent and eternal nature which deserves to be worshipped and admired by all mankind.

Wherefore, as this religion which is united with the knowledge of nature is to be propagated, so also are all the roots of superstition to be destroyed. For it presses upon, and pursues, and persecutes you wherever you turn yourself,—whether you consult a diviner, or have heard an omen, or have immolated a victim, or beheld a flight of birds; whether you have seen a Chaldean or a soothsayer; if it lightens or thunders, or if anything is struck by lightning; if any kind of prodigy occurs; some of which events must be frequently coming to pass; so that you can never rest with a tranquil mind.

Sleep seems to be the universal refuge from all labours and anxieties. And yet even from this many cares and perturbations spring forth which, indeed, would of themselves have no influence, and would rather be despised, if certain philosophers had not taken dreams under their special patronage; and those, too, not philosophers of the lowest order, but men of vast learning, and remarkable penetration into the consequences and inconsistencies of things, men who are looked upon as absolute and perfect masters of all science. Nay, if

Carneades had not resisted their extravagances, I hardly know whether they would not by this time have been reckoned the only philosophers worthy of the name. And it is with those men that nearly all our controversy and dispute respecting divination is mainly waged; not because we think meanly of their wisdom, but because they appear to defend their theories with the greatest acuteness and cautiousness.

But, as it is the peculiar property of the Academy to interpose no personal judgment of its own, but to admit those opinions which appear most probable, to compare arguments, and to set forth all that may be reasonably stated in favour of each proposition; and so, without putting forth any authority of its own, to leave the judgment of the hearers free and unprejudiced; we will retain this custom, which has been handed down from Socrates; and this method, dear brother Quintus, if you please, we will adopt as often as possible in all our dialogues together.

Indeed, said he, nothing can be more agreeable to me.

Having held these conversations we went away.
